NEWS / A13 ACROSS / A15 WORLD / A22 BUSINESS / B1 LIFESTYLE / C1

Pacquiao says speed key vs bigger Clottey

Loren: Mar tried to make me withdraw

25 Pineda allies off to HK, Macau for 'study tour'

Junta bars Suu Kyi from Burma polls

January exports surge 42.5% to $3.58B

Delicious meatless 'pakbet'

DALLAS, TEXAS—FILIPINO RING KING Manny Pacquiao said his lightning fast speed would be enough to nullify Joshua Clottey's size advantage when the two meet here in Texas on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

"My quickness will be the key, my speed," the seven-time world champion told Reuters as he prepared for a public workout in front of a throng of fans.

However, the WBO welterweight champion is not taking his Ghanaian opponent lightly.

PACMAN A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, March 11, 2010 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 91 P18

RP chairs UN body based on Gen. Romulo proposal

THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN ELECTED chair of a United Nations body tasked with promoting the world organization's goals and enhancing its role in international affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

The DFA, in a statement, said the Philippines would be heading the Special Committee on the Charter of the United

RP CHAIRS A2

PNP chief: I won't support Bangit if ...

Verzosa: Illegal to keep GMA in office after June 30

NO WAY PNP Director-General Jesus Verzosa tells the Inquirer: I will oppose any illegal act arising from failure of election even if President Arroyo orders me.

NO. 1 FAN President Macapagal-Arroyo talks with the new AFP chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, during the change of command ceremony on Wednesday in Camp Aguinaldo. Critics have cast doubts on Bangit's impartiality because of his long-standing ties with his Commander in Chief dating to when she was Vice President.

By Marlon Ramos

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLice Director General Jesus Verzosa will not back the newly designated military chief, Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, should he attempt to install President Macapagal-Arroyo as holdover president in the event of a failure of the May 10 election.

"According to the Constitution, we must have a new president after June 30," Verzosa told the Inquirer on Tuesday.

The PNP chief also vowed to thwart unlawful attempts to undermine the electoral process in May and the takeover of any government institution, especially the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

The 120,000-strong police organization has enough resources to "protect the rights of our people" and will remain loyal to the Constitution, Verzosa said.

"We will not support any unconstitutional acts. We will do all things to preserve our democracy and the democratic processes," Verzosa said. "That's why its very important that our Supreme Court is intact," he added.

There was no reason, he said, to suspect that Ms Arroyo would use the AFP to create an artificial power vacuum.

Nonetheless, the PNP has been preparing for the possibility of failure of elections, he said.

Verzosa said he had directed PNP lawyers to study the legal implications. "We are considering all scenarios, in-

PNP CHIEF A4

Slow printing of 50M ballots triggers alarm

By Kristine L. Alave

YET ANOTHER GLITCH IN THE MAY 10 automated elections looms.

The National Printing Office (NPO) is unlikely to produce the required 50 million ballots for the elections and may have to acquire more machines to do the job, or print 15 million ballots for manual polling for the shortfall, officials said yesterday.

In an urgent memorandum dated March 1 to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) project management office, Esmeralda Amora-Lacha, head of the poll body's printing committee, said that the four NPO machines were not operating at maximum capacity.

The daily output is disappointing, leading her to suggest that the Comelec should prepare contingency measures, including the printing of ballots for manual elections.

The memorandum, made available to the Inquirer, noted that as of March 1, some 7.5 million ballots for the electronic balloting had been printed. Of the number, 5.3 million were accepted as "good ballots," while the rest have yet to be checked.

"Granting that 7,878,480 (print-

SLOW A2

Bangit: I never received illegal orders

By Christine O. Avendaño and Jocelyn R. Uy

THE GENERAL KNOWN AS THE "Emperor" yesterday sought to dispel suspicion that the military under his watch would be used to sabotage the election results and "destroy" national democracy.

Formally taking over as chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit devoted much of his 20-minute speech to clear himself and explain his "deep respect" for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I am not the kind of commander who will lead our soldiers astray. I will not allow anybody to use me for partisan politics," he said during ceremonies at Camp Aguinaldo.

"Sa Diyos lang ako magpapagamit (Only God can use me)," said Bangit, the commander of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) from February 2003 to September 2007 and Ms Arroyo's senior aide-de-camp when she

BANGIT A14

Business jittery that failure of election real risk

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE POSSIBILITY AMID RECENT POWER outages of the first national computerized elections failing to produce a president, whether real or imagined, is sending chills to the business community.

In an economic briefing yesterday, Rolland Ansaire, Standing Bank Asia treasurer, said that foreign analysts were apprehensive that if the results of the May 10 balloting were "tainted, it can create political instability."

The treasury veteran and former president of the Money Market Association of the Philippines warned that this could affect the performance of the economy and potentially push away investors many of whom had stayed away for years.

Ansaire said jitters were rising that a failure of elections was a real risk.

"To a lot of Filipinos, maybe 80 percent haven't thought there will be failure of elections and that goes back even to the discussion of why the appointment of a new Justice Secretary

BUSINESS A1

Now, it's Jamby's turn: Villar offered me ₱1B

By Jerry E. Esplanada and Michael Lim Ubac

"₱1 BILLION."

Such a staggering "bribe offer" may be enough to make any presidential candidate sing. Aba'y go ka na ba sa dagat ng pera? (Have you taken a dip in a sea of cash?)

That's how much Nacionalista Party (NP) standard-bearer Sen. Manny Villar—whose campaign jingle recounts the "saa ni mahi"of his hard-up child-

NOW A4

CA junks 'Morong 43' plea for habeas corpus

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Alexis Pape

THE "MORONG 43" WILL REmain in military detention on the strength of a martial law doctrine, the Court of Appeals ruled yesterday. Defense lawyers called it an antiquated doctrine.

In dismissing the petition for a writ of habeas corpus filed by the 43 health workers arrested last month in Morong, Rizal, on suspicion of being communist rebels, a special division of the appellate court said they could no longer question their detention once criminal charges had been filed against them in court, regardless of irregularities in their arrest and inquest.

The court voted 3-2 in ruling the Regan v Enrile case.

The health workers, mostly women and including two doctors and a nurse, have been held at Camp Capinpin, the headquarters of the Army's 2nd Division, in Tanay, Rizal, since they were taken at gunpoint from a farmhouse in Morong on Feb. 6.

John Medina, one of the health workers' lawyers, protes-

CA JUNKS A11

MIDNIGHT RUN Members of the UP Law student government and other concerned citizens held a midnight run and lighted candles at the UP Diliman campus on late Tuesday night to protest President Arroyo's midnight appointments particularly that of Chief Justice should she proceed to name one.

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Northern Luzon and eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with light rains. The rest of the country will enjoy partly cloudy skies with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Catanduanes	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy
Pagudpud	Partly cloudy	Cotabato	Partly cloudy
Laoag	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Iligan	Partly cloudy
Virac	Partly cloudy	Ozamiz	Partly cloudy

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6/55 LOTTO

4	2	8	9	1	0

4D LOTTO

5	2	0	2	4	8	6

MEGA LOTTO 6/45

3	6	13	28	30	41

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Kris joins Noynoy campaign

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TALK SHOW HOST KRIS AQUINO joined her brother, Liberal Party presidential candidate Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, for the first time since the official campaign started in a campaign sortie in Zamboanga City yesterday.

It's was a surprise, late addition to her brother's entourage and her appearance made no immediate impact.

She was mobbed at the airport on her arrival yesterday a day after a Social Weather Station survey showed Noynoy in a statistical tie with Nacionalista Party bet Sen. Manuel Villar.

"It seemed to be hypocritical to say that we are not worried that the competition is smoking up but we are confident that [Noynoy] will win again, "Kris said.

Her husband, basketball star James Yap, flew in earlier with Noynoy.

In a press conference in Zamboanga City Noynoy said he was thrilled that his sister and husband had decided to join him in the campaign.

He said he was happy to have the crowd focus their attention on Kris and Yap. "They are both helpful. I thank them for taking some of the attention off me," he said.

Kris said the chore to make Zamboanga her first campaign trip because it was "special" to the family. It was in Zamboanga City that Noynoy made his final decision to run for president after scrambling with the rumors at the Cuenvillo Conserv them.

"My sister Ruby called and told me 'Kriss, they are looking for you in Zamboanga.' Do 'love I am," said the television star.

Asked how she felt about the possibility of witnessing Malacañang should her brother win in May, Kris said: "I'm sure Noy would not want to take me there and I have my own home. We're okay. But we will support him in whatever way we can."

Kris will be joining her sisters on member campaign sorties in Bulacan city where she hopes the cut take along her youngest son, Baby James, who himself has gained a following in the province.

"We'll break up with Noy to make sure that we will cover more ground," Kris said.

Noynoy is set to go to Bulacan today His goal is to visit 27 provinces before March 26, the start of the local election campaign period.

Mindanao waits for calamity declaration

By Amy R. Remo and Christina Arandela

ENERGY SECRETARY ANGELO T. REYES YESTERDAY SAID THE government is now banking on President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaring a state of calamity in Mindanao to help solve the worsening power situation in the island.

That option will allow the government to tap the calamity fund and fast-track the procurement process as projects undertaken under a state of calamity are exempted from bidding, he said. This option also would not need legislative approval.

Palace officials said they were still waiting for the President to decide if she would adopt the recommendation made by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) for her to declare a state of calamity in Mindanao.

Under the law that created the NDCC, the President has the power to declare a state of calamity, said Presidential Spokesperson Ricardo Saludo.

Access to funds

This will allow the national and local governments to access calamity funds, Saludo said.

The Local Government Code mandates that five percent of the budget of a local government be set aside in a calamity fund, he noted.

"If there is a declaration of a state of calamity in Mindanao, you could use the five percent," Saludo said.

Saludo stressed the importance of the government being able to take action on the power crisis now, noting that the barrow undertaking projects in an election period will cause take effect.

But he noted that a declaration of a state of calamity and "rules for certain activities that are usually needed to be exempted from the law."

The government has been constrained from **using cold dispatch to plug** the acute power supply shortages in Mindanao because under the Electric Industry Power Reform Act of 2001 that privatized the power sector, it is prohibited from generating and selling energy.

Congress approval

The President would need congressional approval to circumvent the ban but her plan to **call a special session of Congress** did not fly because congressional leaders said they would be unable to muster a quorum as many legislators were campaigning for the May elections.

The special congressional authority would have allowed Ms Arroyo to set into motion the process of acquiring the modular generating sets needed to generate additional capacity of 100 MW for Mindanao.

Reyes said the acquisition of the generating sets, as soon as much as P3.5 billion, was the quickest way to solve the problem.

According to Reyes, another option would be to let the private sector lease or acquire the generating sets. He said several companies have already expressed an interest to buying or leasing their diesel-powered gensets.

But this will come at a cost, said Reyes, as these private companies will likely charge for their power a hefty P14 per kWh, more than four times the current P3 per kWh, more hefted is more expensive than hydropower sources.

Time running out

He said it would take two to four months to put in place the generating sets, suggesting that it might be too late to be implemented in time for the May elections.

Reyes said the Department of Energy will be implementing a supply augmentation program, under which big industrial firms or commercial enterprises that generate their own electricity requirements will be asked to sell their excess capacities.

During peak hours, these big industries may also be asked to use their own fuel generating sets instead of using electricity from the Mindanao Grid.

Reyes said he still has to find out how much capacity can be freed up and be made available to the Mindanao Grid through this program.

But if the worst happens and the private sector is unable to undertake the leasing of the generator sets, then the "government will have to do it, because we cannot let the situation go on," Reyes said.

In Isabela, Gov. Grace Padaca has appealed for help from government and the international community saying that hundreds of thousands of subsistence were at risk of going hungry.

The drought has destroyed Isabela's crops, the damage estimated at P3.6 billion, or almost half of the total damage of P8 billion across the country. With TJ Burgonio

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Satur jumps on Villar slip, denies link to NPA

By Nikko Dizon

GOMPO

SENATORIAL CANDIDATE SATUR Ocampo, a party-list representative of the Bayan Muna, yesterday denied having any "organizational links" with the communist New People's Army (NPA).

Ocampo said he could not understand why Sen. Manuel Villar, the presidential candidate of the Nacionalista Party (NP) under which Ocampo is running as a "guest" candidate, had mentioned his name in relation to the "permit to campaign" issue.

"We categorically deny having organizational links with the NPA. We deny that we are among the parties paying the PTC (permit to campaign)," Ocampo said.

In denying military allegations that he was among the candidates paying the NPA to be "allowed" to campaign in NPA-controlled areas, Villar told reporters in Davao City the other day: "Why should I still pay when they are already with us, they are our friends."

Villar explained that he was referring to Ocampo and Liza Maza of the militant Gabriela party-list group, who are both NP guest senatorial candidates.

Invoking Satur's name

Ocampo said he wondered why Villar would "invoke (his) name" in relation to the permit to campaign issue.

"I don't know what he meant. Maybe we can trace it from where I came from but he also made it clear na wala kaming (we have no) permit to campaign," he said.

Ocampo said he has been a member of the underground movement since the 1960s.

He was one of the many activists who went underground after the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972. He was arrested in 1976 and detained for nine years.

A leftist leader declared to communist ex-Villar's "slip-up," while another activist noted that the politician with the rags-to-riches campaign line was simply "not an activist."

While admitting that Satur Ocampo is one leader of the "general category of the Left," Ocampo lamented that the military continued to accuse him of being a leader of the CPP.

"They (the military) say I am an officer and member of the (29) Then I'll pay (how the PTC? They are themselves confused," Ocampo said.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada (yesterday started his campaign when he exposed NPA stronghold of Bicol, and repeated the idea of paying the communist rebels.

Illegal

But Bagong Lipunan Ang Masa (Bayan) Chair Satur Ocampo is a government? There's only one government as far as I'm concerned," Estrada told reporters.

"Here in 1998, when I was campaigning, I went to all the areas that are supposedly infested by the NPA. (I said) now is simple even," he said, referring to his first and successful presidential campaign in 1998.

Estrada will be campaigning through the provinces of Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Batangas until Friday.

"I don't have reasons to run in the area (the region that has almost three million voters. With Sherwan Jurdaleza

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SNUBBING QUIBOLOY

Noynoy apologizes; Manny won't explain Davao no-show

By Gil Cabacungan, Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

LIBERAL PARTY STANDARD-BEARER SENATOR "Noynoy" Aquino III made a public apology while Nacionalista Party (NP) bet Manny Villar appealed for "understanding" in response to the angry words the two leading candidates received for skipping a forum organized by a religious sect leader in Davao City on Tuesday.

Campaigning in Zamboanga City yesterday, Aquino asked for apology to Pastor Apollo Quiboloy, head of a sect called Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Name Above Every Name, which claims millions of members and several radio stations.

"When I go to Davao I will seek an audience and explain to him, that it was something beyond my control," said Aquino in a press conference at the Orchid Garden Hotel, "(getting a cold is something that) human schedule."

Quiboloy, disappointed at the non-appearance of the two top contenders, had called them men with "no word of honor."

Aquino said he had scaled after his visit to the Visayas last week which prevented him from flying to Davao on Tuesday, as he had promised Quiboloy.

"He (Quiboloy) asked me to take medicines and he asked for at least two days of rest. I will have a cold at this time," said Aquino. He said "there would have been no problem if he had everything under his control."

But Aquino said he pushed through with his Zamboanga assist yesterday because he "could not host it off anymore." Aquino is set to go to Davao next week.

On the other hand, Villar campaigning yesterday in Kidapawan, North Cotabato, did not reveal his reasons for not attending Quiboloy's forum, adding, "We ask for (our) understanding."

Before flying to Koronadal City, Villar told reporters he had many reasons—"a hundred reasons"—why he skipped Quiboloy's forum as well as another one held in the division in Davao University.

"What happened should be left to us. We will just talk among ourselves," he told reporters.

Villar said he had explained his decision to the organizers of the lawyers and businessmen's forum, but did not elaborate.

"I have the same reason for both (forums), but I don't want to specify. You know, the campaign enters a home will on the one sickness, and sometimes (it) really is hard for us to attend all the forums," he said.

'They blew it'

Meanwhile, in Naga City veteran politician and Peñarroyo sig Manny Pilapio castigate campaign manager Ernesto Maceda Jr. for his top campaigners lost their chance to get the religious group's support.

"Pastor Quiboloy did not hide his displeasure and as far as (he concerned, without meeting to present (Quiboloy's group), that would imply that they're out of consideration as far as Quiboloy's concerned for the moment," Macerda said.

Maceda said only the PMP's minded former, deposed President Joseph Estrada, administration candidate Gilbert Teodoro and evangelist Brother Eddie Villanueva remain in the running for the endorsement of Quiboloy's group.

But Estrada himself said he would not read too much into the situation.

"Medyo nagtampo lang siya (He was just a little upset)," Estrada said on Quiboloy's reaction to the no-show of Aquino and Villar.

New special prosecutor takes over

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE REPLACEMENT OF DENNIS SPECIAL Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio, who completed his seven-year term just some two weeks ago, was finally sworn into office last night.

The new head of the Office of the Special Prosecutor is former deputy special prosecutor Wendell Sulit who served as officer-in-charge since October 2008.

He was earlier appointed as acting special prosecutor by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez at the height of Garcinero's public rift with Villa-Ignacio.

Tonight for someone on her getting a fresh seven-year term to succeed Villa-Ignacio, Sulit said: "We will be working harder. It is time for healing the wounds. I want to unify the OSP so we can work together as a family."

He also told the lawyers that she enjoyed a healthy relationship with the Ombudsman (whom she described as "very supportive of the office."

The OSP is tasked to prosecute cases against government officials filed by the Ombudsman with the anti-graft court Sandiganbayan.

Sulit said she had been a government prosecutor since 1991.

Villa-Ignacio earlier told the lawyers that she post he would vacate was very important since the OSP would be the one in charge of prosecuting cases...if any...that would probably be filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo after she steps down.

The Special Prosecutor is a presidential appointee. Villa-Ignacio himself was appointed by Ms Arroyo in 2003 but he earlier said that it would be better if Ms Arroyo would leave the appointment of his successor to the next President.

Meanwhile, also appointed lawyer Mark Jalandoni as the new Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon, replacing retired Deputy Ombudsman Victor Fernandez.

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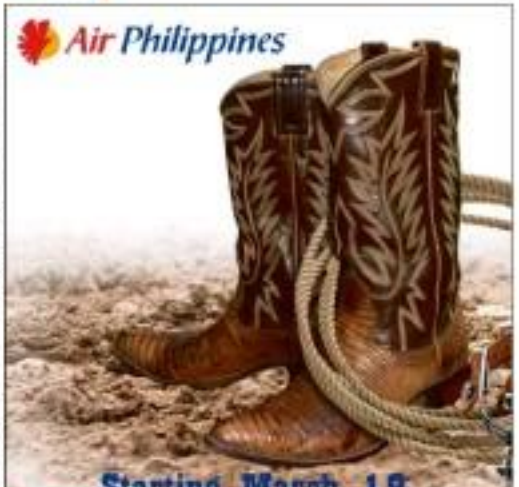
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MANIFESTO OF DISSENT

TO OBJECT TO THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) CALLING & JOINING THE PEACE COVENANT

We, the undersigned officials and candidates in the Province of Cavite, hereby manifest our strong dissent to the proposed Peace Covenant scheduled on March 12, 2010 in the Imus Headquarters of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

While we view with utmost respect the position of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) and the Diocese of Imus on this, we cannot, in our conscience, participate given the initiative of the Cavite PNP in this exercise. **The PNP, through its command in Cavite, has totally lost its moral and legal authority to call and join in this covenant. We no longer believe that the PNP can be a guardian of peace.**

On January 8, 2010, the Regional Trial Court of Imus, Cavite, Branch 21, under Executive Judge Norberto J. Quisumbing, issued, effective January 9, 2010, a 72-hour Order restraining the replacement of PNP Senior Superintendent Alfredo Sotto Corpus by Senior Superintendent Primitivo Tabujara. The PNP hierarchy defied this Order and proceeded with the installation of Senior Superintendent Primitivo Tabujara.

Subsequently, on January 19, 2010, the same Court, this time Branch 90, under Judge Perla Faller issued a Status Quo Ante Order similarly restraining the replacement of Senior Superintendent Alfredo Sotto Corpus by Senior Superintendent Primitivo Tabujara and further made it clear in unmistakable terms that Senior Superintendent Corpus should be retained in his post. The PNP again coldly defied this Order. **Senior Superintendent Tabujara is now the PNP Provincial Director of Cavite against the Orders of the Court.**

For the PNP, from Secretary of Interior and Local Government Ronaldo Puno to Cavite PNP Director Primitivo Tabujara, to openly defy the lawful orders of the court with such ease and convenience is also to transgress our dignity as a nation. The PNP, being the transgressor, cannot demand respect for the law from our people.

The Poll Automation Law will be implemented for the first time in the coming May 2010 election. We now sense a widespread feeling of anxiety that the PNP as an institution may be used by self-serving politicians to alter the outcome of the elections to their ends given the PNP's guts to violate the law. It now becomes the concern of the whole Filipino nation.

Unless the PNP leadership is sincerely revamped, or by the light of Providence there is a change in their hearts, we have no more faith in the PNP. But we continue to have faith in the Filipinos: the secular, religious, teachers, workers, farmers, women, youth, professionals, entrepreneurs, businessmen and others. **We ask you to share our sentiments and be the vanguards of peace in this coming elections.**

The PNP may continue what it is tasked to do. But **we shall keep our faith to ourselves, and fight for our God-given right to dignity and honor.** We are committed to peace and we will take it upon ourselves to uphold peace now and forever.

Signed this 10th day of March, 2010 in Imus, Cavite.

Candidates for:

Governor:

Vice-Governor:

Congressional

Board Members

Mayors

Colorectal surgeons convention set

THE PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF COLORECTAL Surgeons (PSCRS) will hold its first national convention on colorectal surgery on March 25-27 at the Diamond Hotel in Manila.

Scientific sessions, cleanse/fairs, and a live surgery workshop for colorectal and general surgeons will be held throughout the three days, with foreign faculty from Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia sharing their expertise alongside local experts. Issues include recent trends in surgery for common anal and colorectal disorders, as well as minimally invasive surgery for colon and rectal cancer.

On the third day, there will be a live surgery workshop on THE A new minimally invasive technique for hemorrhoids. All of these are in line with the mission of PSCRS to keep Filipino surgeons abreast of the rapid advances in colorectal surgery.

Realizing also the need to update nurses on recent trends in colorectal surgery, an advanced nursing workshop will also be held on March 26 in partnership with the Enterostomal Therapy Nurses Association of the Philippines (ETNAP). Topics will be nursing care for stomas, intestinal staples, and laparoscopic colorectal surgery equipment will be tackled.

Events for colorectal patients and the general public will also be held on March 26, from 1 to 5 p.m. The annual meeting of the General Association of the Philippines (GAP) will be convened, followed by a lay forum dubbed "The Turbulent Colorectal Course."

This forum aims to drive public awareness about the importance of screening and the proper treatment for colorectal cancer. Admission for this event is free.

Registration for doctors and nurses is set at very affordable rates, and the contacts are credited for MCME and NCPAD credits.

The first ever convention is slated to coincide with Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer and cause of cancer death in the Philippines.

For more information on the Convention, please contact Dr. Cindy Montenegro at 09178112326 of the Philippine Society of Colorectal Surgeons Secretariat.

Never say die, says Palace of PASG

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID THE Presidential anti-smuggling Group (PASG) will continue with its operations and the government's fight against smuggling until the courts decide with finality that it was an unconstitutional body as ruled by a Manila Regional Trial Court.

"We will abide by the ruling of the courts once it is final and executory after all appeals under due process," presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said in a statement.

Saludo said the PASG through the Office of the Solicitor General recognized the decision of the Manila Regional Trial Court before the Court of Appeals and even the Supreme Court. — Christina D. Arenas

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AS WORLD WATCHES: Welterweight champion Manny Pacquiao looks to the corner of the ring while sparring with trainer Freddie Roach during a media workout in Singapore, Thursday, or Tuesday, Pacquiao will face Joshua Clottey in a world welterweight boxing match in Arlington, Texas, on March 13.

Pacman says speed key vs Clottey

From page A1

"You cannot underestimate Joshua Clottey," he said. "He's a good fighter, and he's bigger than me, and I have to be very focused in the fight."

'Skills win fights'

Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach interjected that former IBF title holder Clottey, a natural welterweight, had a size advantage over the champion, who began his career forty pounds lighter.

"But I don't think size wins fights," Roach said. "I think skill does. He may be a little stronger than Manny on the inside, he might hit a little harder, but I think our speed will nullify that."

Roach said he had been crunching footage of Clottey's fights and had identified a few key habits that he and his fighter intended to exploit.

"He'll rest his weight on a southpaw stance and then, when you're stepped, he'll throw leads. [So if you stand in front of him, you're an idiot," he said. "We're not going to do that. He's not going to be able to find us."

"Sometimes, he uses his head," Roach said of Clottey '30-3 (20 KOs), whose two defeat came when he was disqualified for head butts.

"If you fall into the pocket with him, his best punch is an uppercut and his second best punch is a head butt. So we're not going to go in there. We're going to fight him at distance."

'Amazing' turnout

A crowd of several hundred watched Pacquiao's workout, a session that a boxing Pacquiao, 30-3-2 (39 KOs), described as "amazing."

The fight will be the first to be held at Cowboys Stadium, with 45,000 spectators expected to attend, and the Filipino said he was looking forward to the opportunity to show his skills in front of such a huge audience at a new venue.

"I'm very excited to fight in Cowboys Stadium, especially because this is the first fight there," Pacquiao said. "It's an honor to fight in Dallas. I can't wait until Saturday. This is for the fans. This is my chance to show them what I can do."

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CODE 17: Sen. Manuel Villar is embraced by police and military detail against an enthusiastic crowd during his visit to the University of Southern Mindanao in Kabacan, North Cotabato.

Now, it's Jamby's turn: Villar offered me ₱1B

From page A1

hood—allegedly dangled before rival Sen. Maria Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal by her ex-boss Manuel Villar Jr. to stop bounding him over the Commission on Appointments (CA).

The offer was made through a Villar emissary sometime last year, Madrigal said in a TV interview yesterday. She made the same allegation in an hour-long interview in January but requested that it be kept off the record.

It was the latest of many points thrown Senate circles and soon developments pertaining to the presidential candidacies who have spent much of her campaign attacking the billionaire VP makoran.

After Dick

Another blaze controller made a similar charge against Villar last week. In a radio interview, Sen. Richard "Dick" Gordon said an emissary of Villar's had offered him a Cabinet post as well as reinstatement of his campaign expenses if he would pull out of the race and go solo on the 0-3 ticket.

Like how he dismissed Gordon's, Villar shrugged off Madrigal's allegation as part of a continuing demolition job.

"It's just like having a different meal served every breakfast, so I don't pay much attention," Villar said in reporters covering his campaign yesterday in Kabacan, North Cotabato.

"He can see the patterns, [my opponents] coming one issue after the other," Villar said, refusing his would expect more of the same "lies" to be thrown his way as the May election draws near.

Waging a nationwide campaign was already costly, he said, "so there's nothing left to be offered [to my rivals] and I will not make such an offer."

"At last at Dr. estimated, I made no offer to anyone," Villar stressed. "I will never make such an offer because I'm focused on my campaign, which I pursue continuously."

A childhood friend

Speaking on the GMA-7 morning show "Unang Hirit," Madrigal said the alleged offer was in exchange for the withdrawal of the ethics complaint she filed against Villar over the U.S. budget insertion controversy.

In a Jan. 27 interview, Madrigal then noted the bayonet not to write about the alleged offer for the safety of Villar's remaining life.

Reached on the phone yesterday, Madrigal said she was "forced to make the P1 billion bribe offer public because I can't sell a lie" when the matter was brought up by "Unang Hirit" host Arnold Clavio.

She described the entire as a "childhood friend, an old family friend."

"He is a private person, a private citizen. Villar's people know he is close to me. That is why they approached him. They also knew I don't have a long fuse," Madrigal added.

Earlier offer P180M

Sen. Jamby first disclosing P1 billion, Madrigal said, Villar "initially offered me P500 million in connection to the 2008."

"He had wanted to have lunch with me several times. That's when he felt I was going in like the others committee report keeping his development in the U.S. anomaly. But I never agreed. Then came the P180-million offer [second through my brother-in-law Jamby Bernal," she said.

She said the P1 billion bribe offer "came later" and then she told some of her fellow senators about it starting a caucus.

One of them, she recalled, even roused how he not taking the money and wondered in jest if she could just share it with the others.

"I'm sure you'll find a P1 billion bribe offer in credible, but for him (Villar) it's all money," Madrigal said.

RSA OF CASH: Presidential candidate Sen. Jamby Madrigal explains her program of governance during the Bukasan 2010 presidential forum held at the GMA Broadcast Center, in Diliman City on Tuesday.

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RP chairs UN body based on Gen. Romulo proposal

From page A1

Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, which was formed based on the 1975 proposal of the country's then foreign minister, Carlos P. Romulo.

Lasting legacy

Ordinola, who served as president of the UN General Assembly from 1969 to 1970, pursued the establishment of the special committee to examine proposals to bolster the UN's role in maintaining peace and security, to advance cooperation among nations and to promote economic progress.

"The special committee is a lasting legacy that the Philippines and General Romulo have given to the UN. It is significant that the Philippines will chair this key UN body as it observes its 35th year," the DFA quoted Ithaka Hasbullah, Philippine permanent representative to the United Nations, as saying.

Hasbullah's deputy, Carlos Sorreta, will represent the Philippines in the special committee's 2010 session, the DFA said. The committee, which convenes on March 1, plans to complete its work this week.

The body has been tackling issues like the strengthening of the UN role in keeping international peace, proper application of sanctions, peaceful settlement of disputes, respect of non-interference and assistance to third countries affected by those sanctions, and request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the use of force without approval by the Security Council.

CARLOS P. ROMULO

Manila Declaration

When the Philippines last led the special committee, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution on Nov. 11, 1982 that adopted the so-called Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes.

The DFA said that on his long and historic service to the United Nations, Romulo gave particular emphasis to the rule of law and the maintenance of peace and security, which are at the heart of the work of the special committee.

"So great was the importance General Romulo gave to the work of the special committee that he decided to give his final farewell to the UN during the 1982 session of the special committee," the DFA said.

Romulo died in 1985. Jaymee Anog

SC throws out disbarment case against Miriam

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DISMISSED a disbarment case filed against reelectionist Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, saying the complainant can instead use Senate impeachment proceedings to remove her from office.

In a resolution dated Feb. 23, the Supreme Court Second Division found no merit in the complaint filed by a certain Efren Ramos, who accused the senator of non-disclosure of two statements she allegedly swore, characterized as falsehood in connection with her son's death, and graft during her past stints as appointee to various executive and senatorial posts.

Ramos had also accused Santiago of being of "unsound mind" and of misbehavior unbecoming a lawyer.

"We find the instant complaint to be without merit. Consequently, the same is dismissed outright," the high tribunal said.

It said Ramos's allegations were "mere presumptions, speculations, conclusions as to motives, and conclusions without any factual basis."

It went on to say that Ramos did not present a single document stacked up any basis for him to personally know of the charges he leveled against Santiago.

"The allegations are plain fantasy," said the court.

"SO we know about the complainant is that he is of legal age with address at BAIRCO Compound Prof. Avte., Manila. Other than that, we know nothing about him. Also, an examination of the 19-page complaint reveals it is not supported by affidavit/s of persons having personal knowledge of the facts alleged," it continued.

The high tribunal said that it would only exercise its power to disbar lawyers in "clear cases of misconduct that seriously affect the standing and character of lawyers as officers of the court and as members of the bar."

Santiago hailed the Supreme Court's decision as a "triumph of good versus evil."

She said the disbarment case was not an extraordinary course sanction, but part of a plot to malign her and to get back at her for her opposition to the road users tax. Reelectionist Santiago defended the "user-granted" controversy.

A disqualification case filed against her evidentiary rebuttal recently said the same allegations has already been dismissed by the Commission on Elections last Feb. 26.

Bishops implore movie stars: Don't endorse condoms

By Leila B. Salaverria

CATHOLIC BISHOPS YESTERDAY IMPLORED movie stars not to endorse condoms, saying they must remain as good examples and should safeguard "the morality of the people."

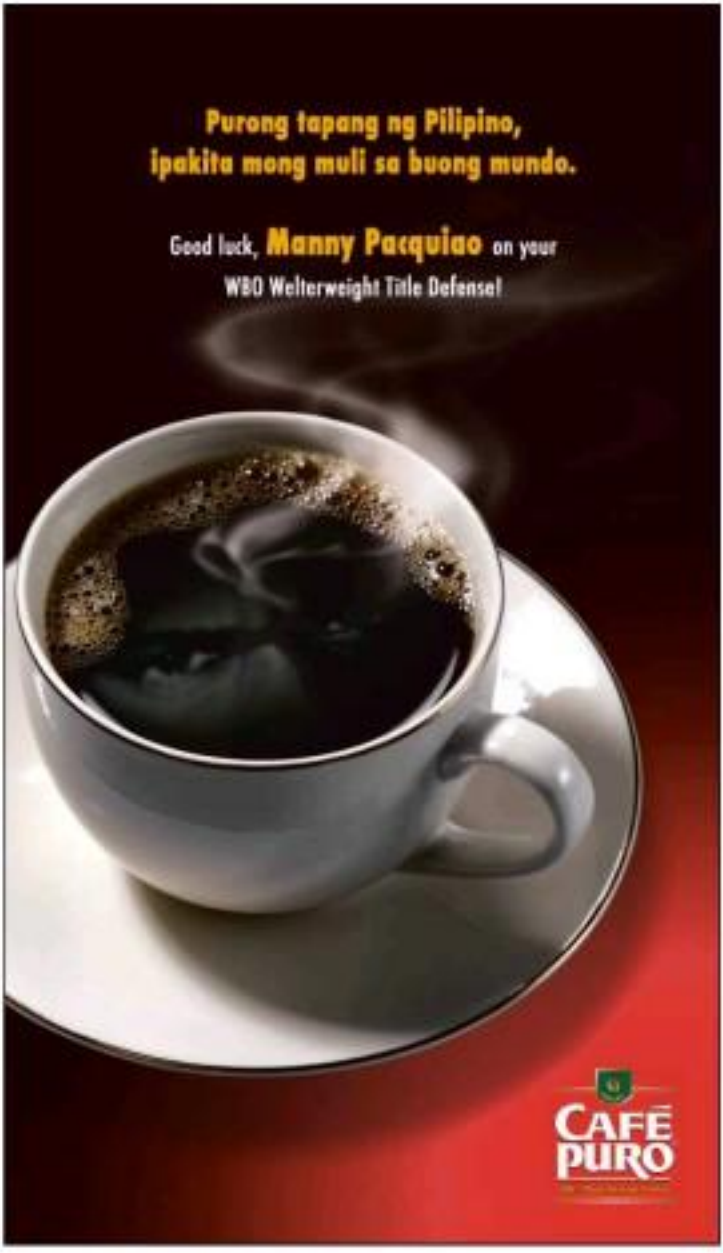
Most Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, former President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), said actors and actresses are admired by the public who adore them, and should thus be more responsible in choosing what products to support.

"The Church disagrees with the use of artists to promote condoms. That is why we are appealing to them not to allow themselves to be used by the Department of Health (DOH) because as artists, they have a public image that is emulated by people," he said in an interview over Radyo Veritas.

"So public figures, they have an obligation to convey to widespread morality, especially that of the youth who admire them," he added.

Earlier reports said the DOH was planning to use celebrities to promote the use of condoms to curb the spread of HIV-AIDS.

Lagdameo Bishop Antonio Ramos also made this same call over Radyo Veritas, and implored celebrities to use their conscience and not allow themselves to be exploited by the DOH to support condom use.



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Int'l electoral watchdog to monitor May 10 polls

By Leila B. Salaverria

AN INTERNATIONAL ELECTORAL watchdog is sending a team to observe if the May 10 automated elections will work in other parts of Asia.

On the other hand, a separate watchdog could crash elections in the country's election motherboard, according to the Asian Network for Free Elections (Anfrel).

Anfrel remains concerned about a repeat of the vote buying and intimidation that has marred the 2008 elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which it had observed.

Based in Bangkok, Anfrel is composed of civil society organizations from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It promotes good democratic governance.

Opening a new era

"The success of the automation system in the Philippine election will open the new era of election administration that could probably be followed by the neighboring countries," Anfrel observer-director Somsak Hussawanit said in a recent interview.

He added that successful polls would showcase the country's political stability and credibility.

Hussawanit said the 32-member Anfrel delegation would assess not just the actual polls, but the preparations as well, including the training and the voter education.

Recalling the 2008 ARMM-initiated elections, she said that the problems that would arise may not only have to do with the equipment. There were problems related to vote-buying, voter turnout and the counting of the board of election inspectors (BEIs).

Hussawanit would also take place when the results are being transmitted to the canvassing centers. She noted that when the machines had bogged down during the ARMM polls, the BEI resorted to manual count, a process open to manipulation.

"We must learn from the ARMM experiences seriously," she said.

She also said she was interested to see whether the atmosphere in the ARMM would be free of fear and abuse of power during the polls, especially in the aftermath of the Nov. 23 Maguindanao massacre.

Business jittery that failure of election is a real risk

From page A1

is important and why it is important at this particular point in time," he said.

If the elections would be rubberstamped, Arnone said "all the gains that the country has made in the last few years can all go to waste."

"Political instability is one thing that we don't need," he said, noting that three countries are among the reasons why global investors prefer global bonds issued by todemia are those issued by the Philippines.

Such concerns have intensified especially amid recent power outages, which have been worst in areas outside Metro Manila.

"Blackouts in towns and we all know that Mindanao for the past few elections have been crucial...can make a critical, decisive [cause] of disaster in an election," Arnone said. "The power outage can hurt the credibility of the elections."

These concerns were also raised by New York-based think tank Global Source in a March 6 research titled "The Next 100 Days."

The commentary written by Filipino economists Pyarao Bernardo and Mario Christino Tiozo said that while the basic assumption was still an orderly transfer of power, they would continue to "keep an eye out for the dreaded election failure scenario."

Lingering doubts

"While the Comelec (Commission on Elections) has been steadfast in defending the last system and has conspicuously dispelled talks of possible election failure, many (not) but lingering doubts about the integrity of the new system would expose electoral results to challenge from losing parties, a risk which multiplied several times over could potentially whittle down public confidence and lead to failure of election," the research said.

With more than 60 days to go before the elections, Global Source said the presidential contest between the front runners—Senators Benigno Aquino III and Manny Villar—still looked "too close to call."

"An expected tight race, where narrow margins require a wider count to determine the winner, has increased attention over possible glitches in the Comelec's computerization program," Global Source said.

Comelec's bad reputation

Both an administrative and a quasi-judicial body that conducts elections and handles electoral disputes, Global Source noted that the institution had seen the Comelec's reputation badly tarnished by allegations of irregularities in the counting of votes and alleged partiality commissioners in the last presidential election in 2004.

"The promise of automation to deliver results by the third day has wide appeal in a country where past elections required votes to wait as long as a week. For the winners, it is proclaimed. Still, many have early expressed misgivings about Comelec's ability to carry out a nationwide automation project in the more than 7,000 island archipelago where far-flung areas are deprived of even basic telecommunications services," Global Source said.

Trust issues aside, it cited concerns that the poll body was given a tight timetable to carry out its computerization project, especially as the budget for the project was approved only in late March 2009.

Delays

Global Source said delays from the start, such as the delivery of poll machines that had shortened preparation for other activities, like field testing, ballot printing, training and education plus risks to the transmission of data, built heightened worries that the Comelec would be relying on a less-than-perfect system. Only 75 percent of the voting precincts are electronically automated.

It noted that several quarters, including a prominent businessmen group, Management Association of the Philippines, had also raised concerns about transparency and auditability of the automated system.

Political analysts have reasoned that given the emerging tight race, a partial failure in the elections or even could result in a genuine inability to proclaim a winner, Global Source said.

"In many people's minds, the risk of partial failure went up following several partisan outages especially in Mindanao, where a large number of the voting population resides and where the El Niño dry spell has reduced capacities of hydroelectric plants," Global Source said.

Four-hour outages

The four-is that power supply in Mindanao will be inadequate come election day, it said.

But assuming that elections push through, Global Source is optimistic that the Philippines will continue to be marked by a swift.

"In particular, we have high hopes that either of the two presidential final runners will prioritize fiscal sustainability issues if he wins," it said.

Slow printing of 50M ballots

From page A1

of some quarantined ballots) are all good ballots, we still have to print a total of 42,945,254 for a period of 54 days. This means, we should be able to have a daily production of 793,438,529, more or less, per day from four printers, which is impossible!" the memorandum read.

Smartmatic-TIM, Comelec's joint venture partner in the first nationwide automated elections, has leased to the commission four Ricoh Streamlook VX 4000 printers, each capable of printing 200,000 ballots.

Lacks said the printers' daily output was only 650,880 or 562,560 each. At this capacity, she said only 34.1 million ballots would be printed by April 20, when the Comelec starts to ship out the ballots. There will still be 8.9 million ballots to be printed.

Alternative: Manual ballots

She said the Comelec should source their a fifth printer from China should be operational by April 5, the original deadline of its operations. If the machine starts printing the same day, it will take until May 11 to complete the 42 million ballots, Lacks said.

"Or to the alternative, prepare for the printing of 8,996,443 or for 18 million manual ballots, more or less, for places which have no electricity or connectivity for lack of material time," Lacks said.

The 18 million ballots correspond to the 30-percent manual balloting that the Comelec reposes will not be covered by the election automated system but will serve as fall back position—or Plan B...for a hybrid polling/ballot-based.

Manual vote preparation

She reminded the Comelec that it would take a month to process the materials and prepare for the printing of blank ballots for the manual elections.

In the previous elections, voters had to write the names of their choices on the blank spaces. With the automated balloting, voters will have to fully shade the oval space beside the names of their candidates.

Some poll watchdogs and information technology experts have warned the Comelec that conducting a fully automated election will be difficult and that it should prepare for contingency measures in case some areas have to resort to manual balloting.

The delayed schedule of the ballot printing, originally set for January, has prompted adjustments in the process.

Last month, it was revealed that 1.8 million ballots for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao did not have NPO security marks as it did not have enough time to perfect the marks when printing started in the first week of February.

Too complicated

Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal said Lacks's memorandum would be discussed in the steering committee today. He noted that Comelec and Smartmatic-TIM had planned to increase the production of ballots at the NPO.

Larrazabal, also steering committee head, said Smartmatic-TIM had deployed Ricoh technicians to the NPO.

"At the start, the production was not as high as predicted, but it's okay now," he said, noting that the four machines produced 700,000 ballots yesterday. Larrazabal said that the ballots printed had reached 12 million.

The suggestion that the Comelec should prepare for manual elections was aired, he said.

"It's all the talks," Larrazabal said, noting that it would be too complicated to conduct manual and automated elections because of different rules and different materials.

Comelec commitment

The Comelec, he said, is committed to print all 50 million ballots.

Larrazabal said the agency also was looking at leasing smaller Ricoh printers. He noted that there were Ricoh printers in Clark, Pampanga, that the Comelec can use, although it was still unclear if they will be placed at the NPO plant in Quezon City.

He said that the NPO facility may lack space for the ballots and the machines. "We are looking for more space at the NPO," he said.

Although the printers will be of different model, Larrazabal said the quality of the ballots will be the same.

77K ballot boxes

Also yesterday Smartmatic-TIM and Comelec officials said they were expecting 77,000 ballot boxes from Taiwan to arrive in Manila before May. Some 10,000 ballot boxes have been stored at the Philippine Distribution Center in Manila.

The ballot boxes will be stored at the Philpost warehouse until they are shipped out to the Comelec regional field just days before May 10, Larrazabal said.

As present, 3,000 ballot boxes are already at the Philpost Distribution Center in Manila, with another 5,000 expected today, officials said.

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Lakas Senate bets grumble over fund lack

By TJ Burgonio

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE Lakas-Kampi-CMD are grumbling over the administration party's apparent lack funds two months before the May 10 national elections.

Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III said lawyer Raul Lambino pointed to the dearth of television and newspaper advertisements and campaign posters for the candidates.

"We're being outgunned by the opposition," Bello said in a phone interview, referring to the more popular reelectionist presidents and congressmen copping the polls for unmerited candidacies.

"We're not subscribed. It's as if we're not running," said Lambino, who initially denounced the Lakas-Kampi coalition chieftained around and joined the clan as a sole senate candidate.

Faring poorly

The nine candidates are faring poorly in surveys.

Party secretary-general Francis Macglo, pac admitted the difficulty of raising funds from traditional sources, such as financiers, men, because of the big number of senatorial candidates.

"This is the first time in a long time that you have so many candidates running for senator," he said by phone.

"But these are fresh, and they will come shortly," he added.

He said the party had to reinvoice projects in the allocation of funds among the national and local candidates, who comprise the machinery of the party.

"It's a question of allocating resources accordingly. We have a high overhead cost because of all the candidates we have to support down to the rangers," he said when asked if the party was running short of funds.

But Macglapus said the party would mount rallies once the campaign for local candidates starts on March 26 to cost on stats.

No solid support

The party placed ads for each of the senatorial candidates on TV from late January to early February, but the two candidates said they were not subpoenaed to be noticed by the public.

Beyond that, there is "no solid support" from the party for campaign materials for the senatorial slate.

"Party officials in the areas that I've gone to are not even aware that I'm running ... We don't even have a group pa rin," Lambino complained.

The other candidates are broadcaster Ben Lengit, Mayor Eamon Ejano of Binalonan, Pangasinan, and reelectionist Senators Jinggoy Estrada Jr. and Edu Lapid. The latter two, however, are doing well in the surveys.

The candidates conceded that the party did not promise anything to them, but said they expected party support for their campaigns, as had happened in past senatorial elections.

"If they release support, well and good. If not, we make do with what we have," Bello said. "I don't know if it's coming or all. We're not getting good signals."

The candidates are executing their own respective campaigns using their own resources.

"There's no frame, there's no direction," he said, noting that Teodoro, Marcoms and the senatorial candidates later met met as a group to strategize about the campaign since the 6th. 9 campaign kick-off. "It's going to be a very different road ahead," Lambino said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 11, 2010
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jer 7:23-28
Gospel: Lk 11:14-23

One day Jesus was driving out a demon. When the demon had been driven out, the man present could speak, and the people were amazed. But some of them said, "He drives out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the chief of the demons." Another accused him to test him. He asked him for a miraculous sign from heaven.

But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every nation divided by civil war will ruin the land and its people. And a family that is divided will fall apart. If Satan fights against himself, how can his kingdom stand? For you say that I drive out demons by the power of Beelzebul. If I drive them out by Beelzebul, by whom do your fellow members drive out demons? They will be your judges then.

"But suppose I drive out demons by the power of God; would not this mean that the kingdom of God has come upon you? As long as the strong man armed with guards his house, his goods are safe. But when a stronger one attacks and overcomes him, the challenger takes away all the weapons he relied on and disposes of his spoils.

"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me, scatters."

Commentary

"Anyone who is not for me is really against me; anyone who does not help me gather is really scattering."

Those who do the will of God,
from whatever nation or tradition,
are not to be judged
and are easily believed and are companions on the way.
We must not divide the family of God
through religious prejudices.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

The Emperor

IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE TO THE NEW chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines that President Macapagal-Arroyo's legitimacy problem extends even, or especially, to his own appointment. Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, quite rational "Emperor," ought to know that his perceived closeness to the appointing power will always be suspect—at least until President Arroyo actually turns Malacañang over to her successor, as scheduled, on June 30. It's not his fault; it's hers.

EDITORIAL

The President has a habit of using her considerable presidential powers for purposes other than the genuine national interest. In particular, she stands accused of subverting the presidential election of 2004 with the help of conniving election commissioners and compliant military generals.

To be sure, at yesterday's turnover of command rites in Camp Aguinaldo, the President used her most categorical language yet about stopping doers. "We remain deeply committed to smooth transition to a new government," she said. It is unlikely, however, that this statement will be heard by many people as the reassurance it was meant to be. When the President failed to use her last State of the Nation Address to even talk about a transition, to marked contrast to the example set by Corazon Aquino in July 1991, public distrust of her intentions hardened, like cement.

Bangit used the ceremony at military headquarters to dispel the notion that he was appointed to the AFP's top post merely to vouch for the President's hack. "I will not allow anybody to use me for partisan politics," he said at the ceremony. He also said ("I am very if that is not what you wanted to hear," he joked) that he had never received illegal orders from the President.

That may well be (and we note that a healthy sense of self-awareness is always welcome). But the President's track record, over since the crisis of legitimacy engulfed her presidency in 2005, when the "Hello, Garci" scandal detonated, suggests that public suspicion about Bangit's appointment is well-founded.

In the first place, the appointment of the President's new favorite general comes at a time of political stress. The country is undergoing a less-than-smooth transition to fully automated elections. While the surveys show an electorate generally optimistic about the automated election system, the Commission on Elections is barely meeting its deadlines under its own revised timetable.

Secondly, the rotating power outages in various parts of the country, especially in remote areas in Mindanao, have added to the worries over both the automation exercise itself and possible attempts by an administration reluctant to leave power to manipulate the results.

Thirdly, and most chillingly, Senator President Juan Ponce Enrile has sharpened public fears about the possibility of a general failure of elections by proposing, in case of such a calamitous failure, something not only unconstitutional but anti-democratic: for the AFP and the Philippine National Police to temporarily take over the government. Coming from an astute lawyer who has the ear of the President, this sounds disconcertingly like the laying of a dangerous predicate.

The new executive secretary, Leandro Mendoza, himself a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy and some chief of the PNP (cited to dispel speculations about Bangit's ultimate loyalty by referring to the "professionalism" nature of the military organization. "Once you're appointed, your focus is not personal anymore. [It's] not to the appointing authority anymore but, particularly, to your constituents."

But Mendoza is not exactly the right person to talk about professionalism rather than personal loyalty. Like another former general, Angelo Reyes, he has stuck with President Arroyo through thick and thin, since taking control of the PNP after Edsa 2. Indeed, Mendoza belongs to that growing group of generals, both in and out of active service, who have done the President's bidding at all times.

Despite Bangit's brave assertions—"Our country needs to move on. For this we need credible elections"—the verdict is still pending: Is he merely one of them?

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Improbable hero

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"CHING AND HIS TIME" IS A FORTHCOMING book that profiles a newspaper publisher who fought his most bruising battles when the Marcos dictatorship shut down his presses.

"Ching" is Joaquin P. Roces (1913-1980). "He spoke, pontificated and editorial-independence, he built the Manila Times into the leading daily in the early 1970s, recalls Siegel Lucena of Sentro sa Mindo.

Ching was just as apt to write his paper was shut down by the dictator. "In the height of the fight, he would be an old tiger, sometimes all his remaining vigor to a cause greater than any other he had fought for."

Tantrums? Lucena: on the publisher who rose above threats by never sought. That, the glimpses one caught of Ching, in earlier books, are simplified.

Ching was the "the kid in dirty shorts who doubled as an mail courier," Armando J. Malay recalls in the biography, "A Guardian of Memories." Named Times publisher at 23, Ching became Malay's boss.

Manila Chronicle's Eugenia Lapez Jr. dedicated her thesis: Leadership. Raul Rodrigo writes in "The Power and the Glory," Both were imprisoned by thieves. Both had their newspapers seized. After People Power restored liberties, both returned to publishing.

"Shortly after Edsa 1, was walking in Cuneta Hall when Ching came by," layperson columnist Armando Doronila recalls. "He got down from his car and said: 'Dino and I are talking about restoring the Manila Chronicle. Would you like to run the paper?'

"No, by all means," Doronila replied. "Because with Ching and Dino together, you cannot go wrong."

That's to change of page one," recalls Rodolfo T. Reyes who went on to MBC-DZBB. "But even later in the 1970 issues I handled did Ching ever suppress that I suppress or play down a story?

The story gave orders," Press Secretary Leandro Mendoz Jr. adds. "He has had to some bit, publish. Yes, he knew he could be killed but was behind everything happening on the paper."

That ranged from Benigno Aquino Jr. to Imelda, using the surrender of Hak supremo Lim Seng and boon publisher Chino Cruz to negotiating on the one politics and issues to helping the only seven or eight million on the Daily Mirror's rolls. 20-year-old lobby Yap Chua. Most fondly called him "Ching."

Chito didn't speak much. When President Marcos casually mentioned plans to dump on martial law, just as casually, Chino said he'll re-

"All he wanted was to publish a good newspaper," Enrile recalls. In so doing, he provoked the dictatorship by ensuring that the paper published "its social role as watchdog on government."

"Chino began his fight with perhaps no more than a vaguely compelling sense that something had to be done." The wish subsisted into resolve as the ex-publisher started at the bloodied entrance of his former nemesis, Benigno Aquino Jr.

Soon, he was a fixture at protests. He walked across five cities as marched for the murdered leader. Ninoy's funeral. "You saw the old man, left alone holding his ground, emerge from the war-gas."

Family friends tried to protect him from reprisals. Chino was a "simple outsided man who could be spanned," they told the dictatorship.

Chino's response was true to form. "Simpleminded? True. The incapable of complicating things for myself."

One who agreed was Ferdinand Marcos. Bred his diaries. Following the 1972 Plaza Miranda bombing, Marcos pinpointed Roces as key to the "media liberation." How "liberation" he commented later. Everything that Marcos does is wrong."

It was Chino and Ateneo student Gerardo Espina who masterminded the peaceful 1978 "Sons Barings," recalls activist leader Charlie Avila.

Chino understood what George Orwell, author of "1984," wrote: "Every joke is a small nail in the coffin of dictators." Like Anton Castillo Jr., he was a repository of the latest wisecracks against the regime.

While others dwindled, he launched the one-million signature campaign to convince a reluctant Corazon Aquino to contest the snap election. "Chino," Enry pleaded, "Ninoy ay yung kakabaro niyo. Dapp all that foolishness of yours," Instead, he came back with over a million signatures. The rest, as the dreadlines would say, is history.

"He was perfect for the signature campaign," recalls Raoul Sinadjo. "He had moral power and no agenda. People just gravitated toward him, spontaneously the unorganized."

At 75, Chino lay dying from cancer. After risking life and limb in street battles, he was a hero doing an unheroic death. "You can die and lose your thing in one instant...say for five-year recovering the street," he'd quip. "You have better chances for a return from there."

He refused to go to Stanford Cancer Center. He went home—to newspapers. "The smell of paper and ink, at the three-for-him Capitol Publishing compound gave Chino and brother Ramon the perfect last or home."

"It's been of the 1986 drama—how the right-or-right that we...too, adopt one standard for the wrongdoer who is poor, and another for the criminal who is rich. Whatever will never forgive those who compounded our being awarded the legion of Honor.

"It hurt when he said it," President Corazon Aquino said. "Yet, if any man had the right to say it that was Chino."

His response led to overseas by government.

Chino asked for Cardinal Sin to administer the last rites. Cory put into his hands the rosary that Sister Lucia of Fatima had sent at the beginning of her presidency.

"Will you take it?" he all, right?" Chino asked those around his dwelling. "Yes, Tikang. Everything will be all right."

He who "spared the future," Santos says.

Cures (2)

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

DR. TED'S METHOD OF EXAMINATION IS this: He presses his thumbs on your wrists and feels the throbbing there for several seconds. Then he asks you to flash your tongue up and down while he looks at with the aid of a penlight. All this takes about a couple of minutes. Then he tells you what's wrong with you.

The telling is quite amazing in its level of detail. But this happens for men. Chinese patients only when there is someone to translate from Chinese to Tagalog. Dr. Ted's Tagalog being extremely limited, in the manner of my pasing there. I've heard her tell someone she had a small hole in the fourth chamber of her heart, that another's cornea in the stomach was not malignant, that someone's left testicle was smaller than his right one, that a diabetic patient's kidneys were still working by 40 percent. The story goes that he once told a woman there was nothing wrong with her teenage daughter, she was just pregnant, and got a scolding by the upset woman for his pains. He was right.

Dr. Ted tells us that what seems amazing to us is quite common in China. That method came from the tradition of "treating nobility in medieval China. No one could touch the emperor or his family in any part of the body on pain of death, so their healers had to devise ways to treat them by looking at other parts of the body—by looking at their eyes, their tongues, their nose. The nose-reading is already a "corruption" of it.

Our supposed however that some healers are more gifted than others. Dr. must sensitive. Several signs on the wall order the patients to shut off their cell phones, reminding one of airplanes that demand the same thing because they interfere with signals from the tower. Now and then, Dr. Tan would bark that someone's cell phone is open, and the embarrassed culprit would hasten to switch it off with profuse apologies. I don't know that things like that can be taught.

Dr. Tan then asks you if you prefer tea or tablet. Several signs in the room proclaim that the tea is far more effective than the tablet but names be worse. After you express your preference, he writes his prescription in Chinese and you feeling it is in a long-term denominate.

Naturally, I've preferred the tea, being the more effective one. But to say that it tastes the worse than the tablet is to say that GMA is far worse than Mother Teresa—it is the understatement of the century. The thing, which contains in my estimate—I observe that everybody's smoke dries, herbs, roots, bark, leaves, shells and what-ever else is in there wrapped in packets which you empty into a pot and boil, tastes variously like asphalt, rust, muck, and other unmentionable things. Not that I've tasted any of them, but I figure that's how they're "boxed" to, taste. My friends say the same thing about their brew, and add new horrors about its smell when boiling. I've always joked that no wonder it cures—taste like that can scare away any disease.

That's what I've been drinking twice a day for nearly two years now. The effect?

Well, first a caveat. If you're expecting instant cures, look elsewhere. This thing takes time. Quite unlike Western medicine, which is hotly localized, or which treats the disease directly, thereby getting instant relief, this one treats you as a whole, which strengthens your resistance to the organic that fight the disease. That is not an authoritative claim, that is an impression. I have neither the qualification nor the inclination to make medical pronouncements. I can only vouch for experience. It takes time. But it has the virtue of having no side effects. And it has the virtue, as far as I can say for myself, and as far as my friends can say for themselves, of working.

I didn't realize it until much later. Things that happen gradually go unnoticed, not unlike your kid growing up. The dramatic change having you only when you look at the extremes. All I know was that the crinkling in my bones, specifically my knees, seemed to be slipping away to be replaced only by a feeling of "real steel." It used to be that I'd need a while to get just after I stood up, my legs feeling like lead. Now I am able to move about immediately, though with that feeling of "ease," or even some pain, for a few seconds. It used to be that I'd be dead tired after walking to or from 168. Now I find walking there (and further on to Pasong Tamo) pleasant all over again. It used to be that I'd need to cling on to the banister to climb up, and (worse) down the stairs. Now I need the banister less, and I have gotten back to climbing five stories up and down without it.

The more dramatic personal curse for me when we were in the United States last June for the Gawad Balagtas conference. At one point, my daughter Miranda and I walked all the way down from the upper east side to the upper part of midtown Manhattan, stopping only for lunch. We had to look at the sights and shops (notably the huge Apple store near Central Park), but without sitting down. It took all of three hours. The weather was pleasant, and and even chilly (for tropical creatures like us) so some pain, which helped greatly. At the end of it, I was dead tired, but could readily say, I cried out soundlessly, "Thank God for Dr. Tan."

I'm not out of the woods yet. The right, or bad-ly, are still there in my hands and feet and knees. The tea can't remove them, says Dr. Tan, and he approves of the idea that I get rid of them with surgery. I still get high blood pressure now and then (my mother's family's contribution), but since I started walking long distances again, less and less frequently. And the "resistance" in my knees remains, though quite unlike ordinary rest, this one has been dropping more and more. I don't know that I can go back to my younger days when we used to march from Iriba to Plaza Miranda like a breeze. But hope springs eternal.

And some hope-have more basis than others.

Employers should avail of SSS penalty condonation

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM WITH SOME DISMAY the inability of the Commission of Elections to extend to Bilaran-based writ of execution for the installation of Roberto Puentespina as governor of Bohol in 2007 and the unresolved status and desire order of Jennifer Mendoza as mayor of Bilaran instead of that office. It has been two years and a half since Puentespina first filed his protest case. Last December the Comelec finally issued its decision ruling in favor of Puentespina. Mendoza appealed the decision to the Supreme Court refused a status quo order until March 31 on Mendoza's appeal. There should be a faster way to resolve election-related cases, as oftentimes the rightful victim doesn't get to hold office for a decent period of time. A deadline should be imposed on the resolution of protests so it doesn't become a travesty of justice.

* * *

I do not write about the SSS because my husband is a part of it, but a recent development there involves public interest. Cecile Alvarez and I nominated our dance programs for Commissioner Jessie Dimalanta and Alfredo Benavidez, executive assistant commissioner, for the Gawad Galing Pook 2010, which grants the 105 "one-time authority" to combine penalties on delinquent employers by employers. Signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo last 7, the financial security clause of Republic Act 8282 amended by Congress to help employers whose businesses have been affected by the financial crisis and recent calamities and who, as a result, have failed to remit their contributions on time. In December, it's only the third time since 1954 that a calamities law was passed (in 1990 nearly 23,000 employers availed themselves of it, resulting in 101 millions of P1,000 each), and in 1997 (P2,000 each). **Under this program, we received P695 million). As the moment, 530,000 delinquent employers owe the SSS close to P5 billion, incurring penalties of up to P36 billion.** They now have the opportunity to settle their contributions with the SSS, whereby accrued penalties on delinquent contributions due on or before Feb. 1, 20 to be condoned to the full, but they have to get approved within the period from Feb. 1 up to June 30, 2010. Under this program, the employer is in process of the delinquent remittances and the

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassayan

balance can be paid over 60 months at 3 percent interest. The law was a good collaboration between Mendoza, Congress and the SSS. Employers should take advantage of it.

* * *

During the run-up to the official campaign period for candidates for national posts, I noticed that John Magsaysay had no TV commercials, which was surprising as it was given his long stint in the medium as a celebrity program host. Several news items of considerable funding for his vice presidential campaign, a situation that led Senator Loi Ejercito to say "Makakasama namin siya." But this is a remark that observers say could be more appropriate for her husband, former Sec. Ralph Recto, who has to contend with the continuing stigma of being the losing behind the P-NET in his favorite bet.

* * *

Despite the public support, Hinirans shouldn't lag behind for long, given his impressive record as former vice mayor of Makati, longtime president of the Vice Mayors League and chair of the Optical Media Board. This Lakbayan does not belong to the category of pasyalan, pamamanata or pamamasyal, pamamanata outside the big cities leave much to be desired. On pressure-cookers on a range of issues are sensible and articulate and to a growing number of people. He teams up with Gibo Teodoro (together by the media as the 3rd bump team) to prevent to be quite workable.

* * *

From time to time, I grab the opportunity to attend international conferences abroad. It's at least me from the Pinoy mentality that the world revolves exclusively around us. In Kathmandu, Nepal, where I recently joined the 4th standing committee meeting of the International conference on Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), I realized that some good does come out of such gatherings. At the ICAPP General Assembly in Kazakhstan last year, former Speaker Jose de Venecia, its founder, had proposed the admission of the India-Pakistan peace talks on Kashmir via informal, intra-party talks between India's ruling Congress Party and Pakistan's Pakistan People's Party headed by President Zardari, the late Benazir Bhutto's husband and an ICAPP ex-honorary in Kathmandu, where ICAPP leaders assembled, the new pro-India Anglo government of national unity thus happily formed from former Pakistani presidential candidate Shahahid Hussain that two weeks earlier, the Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers became cordial. In New Delhi after a long stalemate, ZPP opined that talks for a negotiated political settlement between these two nuclear powers would free hundreds of thousands of troops across mythical—football—in South Asia's long borders, a feat that would confront terrorist Taliban and al-Qaida extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Maoist guerrillas in India.

* * *

JDV also stressed that Asean's political parties could work to create a role for South Korea's President Kim Jong Il in the Asean Plus Three process, as it to prevent that country from being completely isolated in the ensuing japan endorsed Kim Jong Il's succession. The new president of South Korea's political and economic integration, he argued, would be the final solution to the China-Taiwan conflict. The item was not lost on us Hanoi, however, that despite his personal friendship with Kim, JDV's meeting with Kim Jong Il was in response for his wife Dina in Pangasinan's 4th district and for his son, Jose de Venecia III, now running for the Senate with Joseph Estrada's fledgling Manny Pilipino.

* * *

As ex-photographer Mandy Navarro, has been taking interested parties to her famous photo safaris in Batanes for years now, in response to many requests, she has announced that she will conduct them on March 19-23, April 1-5, April 23-26 and May 7-10. She will do another one to Sagada to Cordon, Palawan, from May 15-18—a perfect way to unwind after the elections. Call Mandy at 899-1767and 896-7208 and 09153.233.8364.

Hildegarde and the 'Goddess at Sunrise'

UNTYPICAL AND MYTH-SHATTERING BUT beautiful is the trophy that noted sculptor Agnes Arellano created for the Hildegarde Award in Women in Media and Communication. The award is conferred yearly during Women's Month by the Maria Cristina Fernandez Foundation of St. Scholastica's College to honor and recognize the outstanding contributions of women in shaping the Philippine media.

Arellano's "Goddess at Sunrise," done in authentic ivory, is a figure of a naked woman with arms raised and the palm of her hands facing upward, like a carrying half of the sky.

Well-endowed on the hips, thighs and breast, "Goddess" is reminiscent of Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus," the mythological title, like Rafael types perched on giant shells, but while she is a vampire, she and such in bone, her back rolls another story.

She has a tattoo of a sun on her back, and it could also rise up to try the back of her slightly upturned head; she has a third eye on her forehead and a serpent is crawling around her feet. Or, the trophy's base are signs and symbols related to Hildegarde.

"This is truly such a fascinating piece," says Arellano who is to costume search of the sacred feminine. "Goddess" is a representation of the shadow of a woman that Arellano had seen on a billboard as a student and which gave her an "aha" moment. (She can see it on the right side of the photo.)

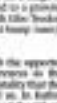
The Hildegarde Award is now on its fourth year. This year being the 25th anniversary of St. Scholastica's mass communication department, the students and faculty decided that the awardee should be a broadcast media: broadcaster Tina Monson Palma of MBS-CBN and Shirley Buan, teacher, singer, songwriter Imam Fernandez (posthumous), and two of the four sons.

Much of what I said to those at the rites I drew from the Hildegarde piece I wrote in this space some years ago.

Again, I say, it behooves us to learn from great women who found many centuries removed from our time, women who left their mark in their niches, through their caring and groundbreaking work. Women crying in the wilderness, prophets in their time, women of uncommon courage and wisdom.

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo



Hildegarde of Bingen was one such woman.

Hildegarde, a saint of the Catholic Church, was an extraordinary woman who lived in the Rhineland valley in the 12th century. She was the abbess of a large and prosperous Benedictine abbey. She was a prominent preacher, doctor, scientist, artist, mystic, healer, poet, musician and composer. She had numerous books on theology, medicine, the science and physiology, as well as commentaries of wisdom and knowledge. Today she would be considered an eco-feminist.

Three of us who were educated at St. John knew her as one of the great female/true saints but we didn't know much about her life and work. Now we do and we had her.

He knew it: Hildegarde done in the building up from, the most imposing structure on campus, done in honey hue and fenestrations style, with its mystic arches, tragic columns and its cloistered hall. On the front wall of the building are busts Hildegarde and scholastica's images in bas relief.

Both the size of the women's movement, Hildegarde is back in her element, to be spread, as she is being celebrated. Her written works and music are being studied.

Hildegarde was 42 when she began to have visions that she recorded as "illuminations." I have the book "Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen" with commentary by Matthew Fox who said of her: "If Hildegard had been a man, she would be well known as one of the greatest artists and intellects on the the world has ever seen."

For children, Fox said, "to my mind Hildegard, and all her sisters, past, present and to come, is a hope that their wisdom will cease to be suppressed, ridiculed, forgotten and otherwise excluded from church, society and culture, so that the earth might be blessed and mutually taught by the law of the land."

Silvan Runner OSB Edwin in "The American Benedictine Review": "[Hildegarde] assigned a page for his creativity and accompanies the mood Medicine. She taught scholars and preached to clergy and laity as no woman before her had ever done."

For all her genius, for many children, she was eventually outgrown, but in the 1900s she began to emerge and sometimes of her significance began to grow into classic is now being placed.

Of her own vision, Hildegarde said: "These were very, very real and not like waking visions, terrifying mysterious, rebelling and sometimes gratuitous and gentle must contribute to life in the pulse, life and flow of the music that sings in me. My time was my last hour and my first hour attached to the same."

But it is in "illuminations" that one gets a glimpse of Hildegarde's "greening power." She coined the word "viriditas." She was first to view the universe as a cosmic egg. She offered a mind-boggling explanation for the existence of the mysterious beauty. I couldn't help thinking Hildegarde was right sometime ahead of Teilhard de Chardin.

Hildegarde sings to us even today, and those lines from her could very well be for us, her 21st century women:

"O fair, O greenest branch, ... O viriditatus eugis...! Which the wise come, that you blossomed in your branches! And just was the world to you! For you shall be set on the height of the mystic the holiest./ For to you blossomed the beautiful flower that gave fragrance to all the spices/ which had been dry/ And they all appeared in all verdure...

"O like spring governance of God's hand,/ with which he has planted an orchard,/ You rise so splendent into the highest heavens,/ like a pioneering pillar,/ You are porous in God's seeds..."

Celebrate Women's Month, celebrate women power!

Send feedback to cmsp@hotmail.com or www.cerezdoyo.com

To take the lead by leadership

THE REMARKS OF THE NATIONAL CAMpaign has two parts: from the present time, when the season survives have flared the remaining challenges ahead for the two leading candidates, to Holy Week; and then, from the resumption of the campaign after the Comelec ban on campaigning on Holy Thursday and Good Friday (April 7-12), to the end of campaigning on May 8, two days before the elections. Each of these has two phases—the middle and final stretches of the presidential and vice-presidential campaigns—are the least campaign period that began on March 26 and overseas voting which began on April 9, 2010.

Most voters have already made up their minds, but it isn't enough for a clear push win for the leading contenders. As the campaign becomes increasingly acrimonious, the undecided voters and those still persuadables list all of their need to find a way to set themselves apart from the rest and demonstrate what most voters are hoping to find, after a decade of missed opportunities: leadership.

The challenge of leadership hangs on the willingness—or reluctance—of the candidates to take a stand on the President going beyond voting with the idea of washing the voting electorate by means of inserted how to actively pursuing it as the leader of the country.

U.S. Chancellor, in "Empires and Other Ills," put it this way: "The worst thing in the world is to say out before you are hurt. It is no good to say out after you are hurt, and it is no good to say out unless you are hurt. People will about the impatience of the people, but sound historians know that most tyrannies have been possible because men missed too late. It is often necessary to resist a tyranny before it comes to be a tyranny to say with a decent optimism, that the scheme is only to the air. A blow from a hatchet can only be parried while it is in the air."

The President likes exploring multiple options in multiple directions. He likes to be all things to all constituencies, but it also pursuing her own candidacy... both in her district and nationwide...while putting in place obstacles in the path of candidates

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

who she knows will never compromise or collaborate with her. Pilots is others married her cause in.

The President assumed a candidate-observer pattern of speeches have been overshadowed by his naming his candidacy to her, wrangling his chances to in the cradle. As if the President's line of death weren't enough, the Presidential Coalition isn't supporting his candidacy with the vigor it used to—indeed it approached the 2004 elections. The can only suggest that Gilbert Teodoro is a token candidate in the eyes of the President herself, and it's well to remember that Ana Maria Bautista had pointed out in her column back in March that you that Teodoro was viewed as someone who had to relinquish the defense portfolio if plans, then rumored to be afoot for martial law, could prosper. As it turned out, when the President made the announcement that Joma political taboo (martial law), Teodoro was already a candidate, out of Camp Aguinaldo, and could only make a cosmetic impact on the outcome of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

In much for Teodoro, now in the galling situation of not even getting the full endorsement of his President or his party. The President instead has been pouring resources into Pampanga to get herself elected to the House of Representatives and is said to be meeting quietly with congressmen and local officials to get herself elected speaker in the next administration. Plus A.

Meanwhile, the President is free to vote in unconstitutionally (and scandalously) appoint the sexy dust justice she has appointed a customs and chief of staff for the Armed Forces; she sees

herself a revenue of jumps unknown by having Cabi set officials remain in office even after they do, relief to pursue their own candidacies...failed only when the Supreme Court intervened itself, and she was forced to handicap Ferret presidents by proposing to give the no-no trips to and immigration check fiasco some dusted in the ferret case and refused in a year in the latter instance.

The Gonzalez ban, meanwhile, set the tone for the running-mate slots by saying it required 20 percent of the automated precincts to end up conducting manual polls (considering with Prospero Pichay's claim that he could win by 20 percent). Administration being able to deliver 15 percent of the votes, while accounting the PPCRV and denying accreditation for Bautista supposedly becoming "partial" to Teodoro, Bautista's withdrawal although PPCRV cards said to be partisan, too, as it has consistently said the Comelec bias, peculiar behavior for a supposed electoral watchdog.

All this suggests a government that considers failure an option in the election, like a credible election...one that takes place and isn't accompanied by massive disenfranchisement, system failure, and a protracted, controversial count—is the minimum requirement for the country having any chance of moving forward. Otherwise, the Arroyo administration is in final phases, the term, locally and nationally, entirely help the sound response in dividing ways to expand their options, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the Arroyo legacy remains open while reducing those of her potential successors.

Someone has to stand head and shoulders above the crowd, and those public interests on the collision course between the President and her allies and the May elections being conducted locally. It seems to Chesterton's warning, it isn't an ass that is in the air. Instead, the President is rising in front of the Philippine body politic, spread of a PNP train. It's crawling along because by that means it can remain unnoticed in the din of the current campaign...until it's too late.

Elections in my life

WHEN I WAS THREE YEARS OLD, MY FATHER TIED A yellow band around my head and gave me a shirt bearing the face of a man called Ninoy. And that is probably how I started to be interested in politics.

My father is a die-hard Ninoy Aquino follower. I see Ninoy's face everywhere in our house: on shirts, posters, newspapers, and other paraphernalia that he brought home at one time or another.

He talks to me a lot about Ninoy and his ideals. His fight against the evil Marcos, and Ninoy's martyrdom. Cory. It was the first presidential election in my memory and though I was only barely six years old, I listened to every story unbelievably as if I understood every detail.

If I could vote then, I would have voted for Cory Aquino. Despite all the arguments about her inexperience, she was the person called by destiny to restore that change happened after all the years of abuse by the Marcos government. My father needed somebody who could bring their passion to it to and have enough courage to finally come together in dismantling, "Gamoras, sobra na, pahiran na."

In 1988, I started to read newspapers and watch the news on TV. I remember crying when Ninoy died. Cory and Doy were being "in" then and "The World" tonight." Of course, I read the entire pages and watched cartoons just like any regular kid my age, but current events and politics somehow had an appeal for me at a very young age. And one of the things I could not easily see was that there were very few respectable politicians and too many crocodiles bringing the nation down.

In 1992, a presidential election was held. By this time, my admiration for Ninoy had grown after I read more about him.

Bearing in mind what I had learned about Ninoy, I tried to learn as much as I could about the eight presidential candidates without the help of a library on the Internet, which was non-existent yet. I made my choice among the candidates and talked to adults about it as if I was eligible to vote.

My choice was Miriam Defensor Santiago. She was virtually unknown, but in the 1980s she began to emerge and sometimes of her significance began to grow into classic is now being placed.

Of her own vision, Hildegarde said: "These were very, very real and not like waking visions, terrifying mysterious, rebelling and sometimes gratuitous and gentle must contribute to life in the pulse, life and flow of the music that sings in me. My time was my last hour and my first hour attached to the same."

But it is in "illuminations" that one gets a glimpse of Hildegarde's "greening power." She coined the word "viriditas." She was first to view the universe as a cosmic egg. She offered a mind-boggling explanation for the existence of the mysterious beauty. I couldn't help thinking Hildegarde was right sometime ahead of Teilhard de Chardin.

Hildegarde sings to us even today, and those lines from her could very well be for us, her 21st century women:

"O fair, O greenest branch, ... O viriditatus eugis...! Which the wise come, that you blossomed in your branches! And just was the world to you! For you shall be set on the height of the mystic the holiest./ For to you blossomed the beautiful flower that gave fragrance to all the spices/ which had been dry/ And they all appeared in all verdure...

"O like spring governance of God's hand,/ with which he has planted an orchard,/ You rise so splendent into the highest heavens,/ like a pioneering pillar,/ You are porous in God's seeds..."

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YOUNG BLOOD

Alkmar M. Germantes

We seem to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We invite contributors from the twenty-something and below.—Ed.

My father is a die-hard Ninoy Aquino follower. I see Ninoy's face everywhere in our house: on shirts, posters, newspapers, and other paraphernalia that he brought home at one time or another.

He talks to me a lot about Ninoy and his ideals. His fight against the evil Marcos, and Ninoy's martyrdom. Cory. It was the first presidential election in my memory and though I was only barely six years old, I listened to every story unbelievably as if I understood every detail.

If I could vote then, I would have voted for Cory Aquino. Despite all the arguments about her inexperience, she was the person called by destiny to restore that change happened after all the years of abuse by the Marcos government. My father needed somebody who could bring their passion to it to and have enough courage to finally come together in dismantling, "Gamoras, sobra na, pahiran na."

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Alkmar M. Germantes, 20, is a BS Agriculture graduate of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños and now runs a procurement business.

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Repulse the endorsements

"If you should see, look through your own eyes."

—Spanish Proverb

BUT IF YOU SHOULD VOTE IN THE MAY elections, repulse the "endorsements" and ignore the "influential" personalities who publicly proclaim their anointed candidates and whose statements only tend to pollute the air further, much our suffocated residents are up to backwards us. These endorsers think their line and supposed "clout" lets our system and matters in our race can voters for the wrong reasons and persuasions, thereby unwittingly selling out and and free-of-our servants.

Who are these endorsers? They are the religious "clowns," star celebrities, armed forces, business leaders, "paid" writers and broadcasters, "survey" professors, "team-oriented" advisers, rebels and military men, drug and gambling lords, "warlords," "kingpins," "viceroys," wonks, politicians, government officials and many others.

Let it be known to them and the rest of the world that the only "cry" which we will hear and can capture the one Filipino we would be, our attention is "Unbiased politics" and corruption, the identity of our concern and passion for the country, and above all, the genuine improvement of our "will amid voice" from within the mainstream society involved herein.

We can still make everything about the 2010 elections meaningful and redemptive over morning forward with the rest of winners. The only if we will heed the call honestly...to make the elections leap past and keep them wise and clean.

—ROSE B. VILLEGAS, L.
rosebvillegas@yahoo.com

LETTERS

Gathering clouds dim Comelec's credibility

CAN THE COMMISSION ON ELECtions be trusted? Or will there be another "Hello, Garci" type of scandal (up to now rich has not been brought to closure) in the coming May 10 elections?

We are none the wiser.

1. The automated machines to be used cannot assure us of clear, precise operations. There are reports of limited results in the sample/mock elections conducted recently. There are also reports about the non-proliferation of gadgets that can counter/disrupt transmission signals of the automated system. The Comelec's/automatic's answer to this problem needs to be proven and is not reassuring.

2. Talk too of the unpreparedness of those who will do in the hundred election precincts (machinery members) as well as of the voters. Many of them still have not seen the election receipt on TV (some election mock tests made will be limited so far) on how to do/not properly those and expect how many votes will be wasted because of color flawed markings that the machine will fail to read?

3. Comelec's injunction of harmful, ring hazards to be a non-partisan poll watch body allegedly because of inclusion.

4. The demolition of governors aligned with the opposition (Gerardo Mendoza of Batanes, Ed Panlilio of Pampanga and Grace Padaca of Isabela) as a result of a recount.

5. The hiring of small-time computers to transport the automated machines to the polling precincts raises doubts if they are not from the gargantuan cash cow electronic one.

As early as now, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is being tested by Sec. Ishmael Bautista as the one most likely to fill up the post of House speaker. How soon does an issue surface?

I pray that all those involved in the coming elections will play fairly and sweat the their duties with utmost honesty, and bear in mind that there is an all-seeing God.

—HERCULES P. ESPINOSA, JMM Scout Lane, Magsaysay, Tondo, Manila

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Angat Dam not for sale

THE REFUSAL TO HEED SAN JUAN'S LETTER titled "Propose privatization of 'the last dam standing'" (Inquirer, 3/2/10) is unfortunate.

1) Gateway to life drafts, Angat Dam and its appurtenant structures will not be privatized and will continue to be owned by the government. Only the power component of the dam, the Angat Hydroelectric power plant (HEPP), is up for bidding.

2) The Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) states that "to ensure transfer of generation, control, operation or privatization of multipurpose hydro facilities, safeguards shall be prescribed to ensure that the national government shall direct water usage in cases of shortage as primed possible to users, irrigators and all other requirements for the public interest." The Epira thus ensures the availability of water for drinking purposes and for irrigation.

Also, Rule 22 of the Epira IRR (implementing rules and regulations) provides that "the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) shall ensure that adequate for irrigation, as indicated in the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) and requirements for domestic water supply as provided by the appropriate local water districts are recognized and provided for in the water rights agreements."

In all its privatization activities, the Power Sector of Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corp. ensures that proper safeguards are in place as mandated by the Epira. This is being done in the privatization of the Angat HEPP as PSALM congressionally mandated water rights entered with public norms in the privatization of hydroelectric power plants such as Pantabangan-Masiway HEPP (Angat, 1998), Magat HEPP (2007), and Ambuklao-Binga HEPP (scheduled in October). PSALM successfully negotiated and executed the Operations and Maintenance Agreements for the new power components of these hydro power facilities between the water and electricity governance agencies such as NWRB and Pag-asa.

Besides, the use of Angat Dam water is regulated by the NWRB. The winning bidder for the Angat HEPP will be bound by whatever rules the NWRB imposes on the use of Angat Dam water.

3) Finally, we wish to dispel San Juan's baseless speculation that with the sale of the Angat HEPP "again, a source of possible water will be given to another private firm which is already a water service concessionaire." As clearly stated, the "source of possible water" is not up for privatization. And representatives of the concessionaires of MWSS/Clarin cannot also serve participating in the bidding for the Angat HEPP.

In any event, the Angat HEPP will not be "given away." Angat HEPP will be sold through public bidding. All parties who have submitted and participated in PSALM's bidding exercises can readily attest to the transparency of these processes. The sale of the Angat HEPP has attracted at least 12 interest groups who are currently undertaking their due diligence activities. They too will undergo the bidding process that PSALM has implemented in its privatization program.

—EMILIA L. TOLENTINO
Acting Vice President for Asset Management

Very daunting mission for new press secretary

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S INCOMgarda machine is going full steam to make known the achievements of her administration through full-page newspaper advertisements as the grim reaper of the Philippine economy starting inaugural symposium for every road and bridge completed. Every department in the bureaucracy has been ordered to consolidate some accomplishment to showcase or else posted blame pinpointed him/her. The problem was her propagandists may have overlooked is the multimillion campaign being delivered in the implementation of these grandiose undertakings—supporting mass terrorism the drain of corruption.

GMA claims the losers that she has built more roads and bridges than her predecessor had done. But how many of these were constructed by victims of bit hallmark—the infamous road improvement projects established of by the World Bank? Admittedly she has succeeded in raising to over P4 trillion the P1.6 trillion debt she inherited, her predecessors had assiduously put together.

Showing his mettle and hoping to earn his spurs early in his appointment, Press Secretary Ricardo "Dax" Saludo is likened Dax" to the late Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower's Secretary Marvin Calvino with claims he built many roads and highways than his predecessors did, who was responsible for was to achieve what happened short of saving that GMA is also alleged to have secret accounts in foreign abroad. Skipping the GMA administration of outages of corruptions and abuse will be a daunting job for the new press secretary.

—L. FERNANDEZ JR., rosebkasay@yahoo.com

CA junks 'Morong 43' habeas corpus plea

From page A1

day told the Inquirer that they would appeal the ruling.

"We are saddened by the denial of the privilege of habeas corpus. It means our clients will continue to be deprived of personal liberty," Bimbing said.

But he said he and his colleagues believed that the detainees had a "fighting chance" at the Supreme Court.

The military claims that based on the explosives, firearms and ammunition reportedly confiscated at the barricades, the Morong 43 were engaged in a bomb-making seminar, and not in a health-training seminar.

'Desertion of duty'

"Once a person detained is duly charged in court, he may no longer question his detention through a petition for issuance of a writ of habeas corpus," the appellate court said in the ruling dated March 9 and written by Senior Associate Justice Portia Aliño-Hormachuelos, who chairs the special division.

The majority opinion also said that whatever violations had been committed—as one of the health workers, Dr. Merlie Moreno, suffered during one of the habeas corpus hearings—were "cured" by the filing of criminal charges and the issuance by the Morong Regional Trial Court (RTC) of commitment orders for the Morong 43's continued detention in Camp Capinpin.

Associate Justices Magdangal de Leon and Jhosanadir Villon concurred; the two original members of the special division—Associate Justices Hakim Abdulmajeed Pasaro and Francisco Acosta—dissented.

Pasaro and Acosta said that in upholding the arrest of the Morong 43, the court in effect "deserted [its] duty as guardian of civil liberties."

"Any action on our part upholding the detention bodes ill for this Court and the entire nation. It is a desertion of our constitutional duty as the guardian of civil liberties instead of constantly hearing, employ and proud, the cause of freedom to illuminate the nooks and crannies of our democratic country," Acosta said in his dissenting opinion.

He said the search warrant used by military and police operatives to raid the resort of Dr. Melecia Ybañez was invalid because it was issued against one Mario Condes, who was not among the 43 arrested, and did not specify an exact address.

'Curative information'

Aliño-Hormachuelos said the inquest proceedings were not valid because the Morong 43 were denied their right to counsel. Thus, he said, the information filed in the Morong RTC was also invalid.

"The subsequent filing of the information based on defective proceedings would just put to naught the most cherished right of all civilized nations," he said, adding:

"Once and for all, we must free ourselves from the shackles of 'curative information' if we are to protect our cherished constitutional rights. ... Allowing such curative information to justify illegal searches, arrests and detentions would definitely make every habeas corpus proceeding an exercise in futility destined to subvert that law to nonsense."

In his semi-dissenting opinion, Pasaro also maintained that the arrests and subsequent illegal charges should be nullified because the health workers' constitutional rights were violated.

"... If the use of force cannot make wrongs turn right, the illegal search and seizure as well as an irregular inquest cannot spawn into a valid information, otherwise referred to as 'saturated' or 'curative' information," Pasaro said.

"To say that the Morong 43 were not caught in flagrante delicto or in the act of committing an offense.

"I am not oblivious of the prevailing jurisprudence that a writ of habeas corpus should not be allowed after the party sought to be released had been charged before any court. Nonetheless, I owe it to my oath of office and to the public to embody more than just an affection obeisance to a mortal law ere jurisprudence, Rupak v Kuthe, with all due respect that allows violation of one's oath to graduate into some valid enlightenment," Pasaro said.

Illegal possession

The health workers were charged before the Morong RTC with illegal possession of grenades and explosives and examination of the Commission on Elections' gun ban.

They were subjected to inquest by State Prosecutor Romeo Solmon of the Department of Justice on Feb. 7, a day after their arrest.

On Feb. 12, or a day after lawyers filed the petition for a writ of habeas corpus, the Morong RTC (Branch 78 presided over by Judge Amanthina Cawis-de-Guzmán) issued a commitment order directing the jail warden of Camp Capinpin to take custody of the health workers.

In their petition for a writ of habeas corpus, the lawyers of the health workers denied that they were communist rebels and asked the court to order their release from military detention.

The lawyers said the Morong 43 were held incommunicado and some in solitary confinement for days, and subjected to prolonged custodial interrogation and physical and psychological torture. They said the military deprived them of health workers' relatives and lawyers.

The lawyers also said the Morong 43 were members of the Community Medicine Development Foundation and Community for Health Development undergoing training to give health services to poor communities.

'Outdated' doctrine

But Martinez said he and his colleagues "maintain that the case is a compelling reason for the court to modify the Ilagan doctrine and to make the case an exception."

He said the arrest of the Morong 43 was "illegal, improper and irregular," and that "the filing of charges within the prescribed time period does not cure the illegality of the arrests."

In a statement, the health workers' lead lawyer, Romeo Capulong, said he and members of the Public Interest Law Center and the National Union of People's Lawyers said they had "no recourse but to elevate the case to the Supreme Court."

"In simply adhering to the outdated Ilagan v Enrile, a notorious martial law doctrine, the Court of Appeals extremely disregarded the litany of blatant violations of the constitutional rights of these 43 health workers from the time they were unlawfully arrested and the continued abuse of their basic human rights in the hands of the military," Capulong said.

He insisted that the Morong 43's right to due process had been "gravely violated by the recent CA ruling."

"It is high time the Supreme Court reexamined this antiquated doctrine which has served as a tool of the government [military and the police] to usurp our constitutional mandate to arrest and arbitrary detention of members of progressive organizations," he added.

The lawyers are also preparing for a hearing set by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on March 18. The CHR has ordered the Morong 43 to be taken to the hearing, and also summoned military, police and justice officials, as well as the judge who issued the search warrant.

Martial law relic

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, through its secretary general Renato Reyes Jr., assailed the court's decision and lauded the dissenting opinions of Pasaro and Acosta.

"It was a close decision, and provides basis for revisiting the martial law relic that is the Ilagan doctrine," Reyes said.

Loren says Mar asked her to withdraw

By Nikko Dizon

SEN. LOREN LEGARDA SAID YESTERDAY that her rival, Sen. Mar Roxas, had tried to arrange a deal with her to withdraw from the vice presidential race.

"Each when I had yet to find my running mate, Mar tried to make an arrangement with me 'outside of the political process,'" Legarda said in a radio interview.

She said the offer was made before the Senate adjourned on February.

Legarda recounted that passing by Roxas' desk in the session hall, the Liberal Party vice presidential candidate told her: "If there's any way that you can support my principal and me, if there's anything you want, we can provide."

Talking in riddles

"Please don't talk to me in riddles," she said she told Roxas, meaning none of her, Benigno Aquino III.

Her political adviser interpreted Roxas' statement as "something like an exchange deal."

Legarda said she told Roxas that there was "no backing out for me."

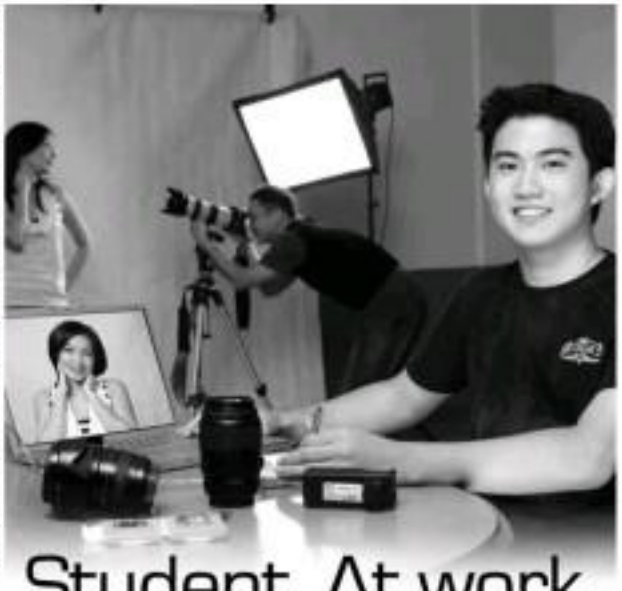
"For Mar, the vice presidency was just a stepping stone because he was gunning for the presidency before. For me, the bid for the vice presidency is the natural continuation of my years in public service and my work to improve the lives of Filipinos by focusing on food security, jobs, health, peace and order, and a livable environment," she said.

In a statement, the Liberal Party said that Legarda was getting "desperate" as Roxas continued to pull away in voters' opinion polls.

In the latest Social Weather Stations survey in February, Roxas led Legarda by 17 percentage points.

Legarda said she expected that by April 1, she would be ahead of Roxas in the surveys, pointing out that Roxas had a head start in the campaign and had spent over P1 billion on his political ads.

CONTENDERS Two vice presidential candidates—Senators Mar Roxas and Loren Legarda chatted at the birthday party of former Finance Secretary Jose Pardo in April last year at the Manila Polo Club in Makati. RAMON MUYCO



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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Marinduque seeks 'pawikan' habitat

By Gerald Gene B. Querubin
Inq., Marinduque

FREQUENT SIGHTings and efforts to rescue sea turtles or "pawikan" in Marinduque have prompted local environment officials and advocates to work double time to have the island-province declared a critical habitat of the marine creatures.

Elivia de los Reyes, acting head of the protected areas, wildlife and coastal zone management unit of the province, said the declaration would enable these concerned to initiate measures to reduce or eradicate threats to the survival of the turtles.

In the past five years, 49 pawikan have been rescued in different coastal villages of Marinduque and eventually released to the sea, according to the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro). Among these were green sea, Olive Ridleys and the rare Hawksbill turtles, the most threatened species.

Last year alone, 35 were rescued and set free, along with 157 hatchlings.

MARINDUQUE plans to institute measures to protect the "pawikan" with the declaration of a critical habitat as its coastal areas have been serving as nesting grounds for the sea creatures, like this one in Barangay Barra in Lucena City fronting the Tayabas Bay. RICHARD M. GUTIERREZ

Rich biodiversity

"The presence of the turtles indicates that the province's coastal areas serve as their nesting grounds, foraging areas and parts of migration," De los Reyes said.

It also means that these areas are rich in extensive marine biodiversity, Danilo Querijero, Penro chief, said. He pointed out that Marinduque is one of the provinces comprising the Verde Island Passage Triangle that marine scientists have described as "the center of the epicenter of marine biodiversity."

"Everybody must be a stakeholder," De los Reyes said in pushing for a declaration of critical habitat. "The primary beneficiaries of this advocacy will be the communities. Village folk should be in charge of their communities' sustainable development."

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources declares a critical habitat of threatened species as that "designated based on scientific data, setting geo-considerations (species endemicity or richness and the presence of manmade pressures and threats to the survival of wildlife."

The known habitat is outside a protected area established under the Republic Act No. 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act.

Quelling threats

Once a critical pawikan habitat is established, authorities can institute steps to protect the marine animal, such as prohibiting the dumping of waste products, squatting, tolerated encroachment or extraction, hauling, logging and quarrying.

They can also punish violators.

Miguel Magalang, executive director of the Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns (Macec), expressed concern that climate change was now taking its toll on the turtles.

Their "original habitat is getting warmer now, driving them to seek sanctuary in the coastal waters of the province," he said.

Magalang said Macec had already intensified its pawikan protection and conservation program among the villagers. It has come up with an incentive program for fishermen who capture the turtles and report their catch to authorities.

"We give livelihood assistance to fishermen, P5,000 for the big pawikan and P2,500 for the smaller ones," he said.

The Penro and the Marinduque are finalizing their action plans after undertaking a thorough survey mapping, assessment, focus group discussions and community consultations.

"The plans and recommendations that will be formulated will be the basis of the DENR (through an executive order by the secretary) or the local government units (through resolutions or ordinances) in declaring Marinduque a critical pawikan habitat," De los Reyes said.

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The need to call a conference on climate change adaptation, specifically disaster risk reduction and management, came to the fore when typhoon Ondoy hit Metro Manila on September 26, 2009. The extent of this disaster, and the devastation that this typhoon, much less the entire country, was unprepared for such an event, and the subsequent finger-pointing that happened months after the disaster struck, became the impetus to assess the current capabilities of government and private institutions to forecast weather, send out reliable warnings, and to ultimately prepare and rehabilitate the populace upon the onset and aftermath of such events.

About dozens of such-a scale as Ondoy or Pepeng are more irregular their ability to paralyze an unprepared nation can no longer be questioned. As such, COMSTE is initiating projects using our wide-spread information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure that can disperse information across the country in real-time, partnered with collaborations with other nations for satellite data, and our own local expertise in analysis and modeling for disaster preparedness.

All these have coalesced into the need for our government to have science-driven and science-based decision making and policy support. Thus the conference titled "Engineering Resilience: Confronting Risk Beyond Adaptation" slated for March 15, 16, 2010 at the Ibarralaan Ballroom of the Sofitel Philippine Plaza in Manila, aims to discuss climate change adaptation, and disaster risk and resilience in the Philippine setting, in the sectors of food and agriculture, public health, energy, infrastructure, and coastal and marine resource management. It intends to bring together national leaders, local governments, financial institutions, international experts, and non-governmental organizations in the hope of building a coherent and integrated S&T strategy for resilience.

Day 1 - March 15

R.A. 9729: Climate Change Act Of 2009

Conference Objectives and Knowledge Architecture and Infrastructure for Integrated Risk Reduction: S&T Strategy and the Disaster Science Center

"What The Philippines Should Do About Climate Change" 20 Yr Outlook

Lessons Learned from Recent Disasters: Post-Ondoy Analysis

Learning from Our Neighbors: Disaster Reduction in Taiwan

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Day 2- March 16

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Assistant Editor Tony Bengcolo

Across the NATION

'EDUCATIONAL TOUR'

25 allies of Pineda off to HK, Macau

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—AT LEAST 25 LOCAL officials of Pampanga, led by Vice Gov. Jonather Guino, left Tuesday for China to "study and observe socioeconomic trends there and to get business opportunities for the province."

But there were reports that the officials, who included nine provincial board members and 13 mayors, went to China to meet with Lilia Pineda, who was declared last month by a division of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) as the elected governor of Nueva Ecija. The division ruling is being contested at the Comelec en banc by Gov. Eddie Panlilio.

Pineda did not reply to text messages asking if she joined or would meet the local officials.

In their travel order, Guino and the board members and nongovernment funds would be used in their March 9-11 trip to Macau and China.

Panlilio said he did not find anything wrong with officials going abroad.

"If they could assist here they could otherwise meet abroad. They traveled on their own without any government expense. They must have a lot to spend so they did it on a bigger budget. But that is really their call," he said.

Traveling with Guino were Board Members Crescencio Cunha and Teotonio Datih (first district), Geraldine Baguinat (second district), Raul Dominguez and Johnny Quiambao (third district), Fernando Yabut and Modesto Calara (fourth district), Raul Mariñas (league of councilors) and Joel Bautista (league of barangay captains).

Also with them were provincial board secretary Luis Rivera and Guino's executive assistant Art Pamacalan.

The mayors who went to Hong Kong were Edgardo Pamintuan (Mabalacat), Teddy Tumang (Mexico), Jerry Dilayo (Candaba), Eduardo Guevarra (Floridablanca), Peter Pamintuan (Bacolor), Romeo Dungca (Macabebe) and Rodrigo Catalan (San Simon).

The mayors who went to Macau were Oscar Tetangco Jr. (Apalit), Dennis Pineda (Lubao), Marino Morales (Minalin) and Chito Espino (Arayat). Nena Mayor Nagsiamat took the Macau-Hong Kong China package. Dennis Pineda is son of Lilia.

The Comelec en banc has yet to issue resolutions addressing Pineda's motion to be installed pending a petition for reconsideration filed by Panlilio.

The Catholic priest claimed that before with "training, history" and "ML" were not connected in his favor during the recount. Reporter Ortaya, inquirer Central Luzon

Girl who saved brother from fire suffering burn infections

By Cathriff Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE SIX-year-old child from Sipalay City who saved her four-month-old brother from a fire last June remained in the burn unit of the Teresita Jalandoni Provincial Hospital in Silay City because her wounds have developed infections.

Virginia Rojo had been treated at the Sipalay Doctors' Hospital for second-degree burns on the upper half of her face and hands and back and second-degree burns when she saved her baby brother, Jason, from the fire that destroyed their house in Barangay San Jose, Sipalay City on Feb. 28.

Scars

Dr. Wanda Almarez of the provincial hospital said the facial areas of the child's body were being cleaned to prevent infection. These burns were expected to leave scars on Rojo.

Rojo's mother said Papa Jesus spoke her up and told her to save her brother from the fire, as her mother and other family members were in the house at the time.

Rojo has never been bathed as a newborn, especially by her neighbors, and numerous donations and offers of help have been made to her and her family.

Sagay City Mayor Alfredo Marañon, who is running for governor of Negros Occidental, has promised a full scholarship from elementary to college for the Sipalay child forever.

Real courage

"What Virginia showed was real courage," said Marañon who turned over P50,000 to help in the medical expenses of the child.

Marañon assured Rojo's family that he would personally provide a full scholarship for Virginia and livelihood assistance for her mother who wants to a living wandering vendors.

Marañon also urged Negrenses to help the child who would have to undergo surgical procedures to repair the damage on her face.

He expressed hope that Virginia's act of courage would "inspire all of us to have moral courage."

Moral fiber

"We need to strengthen the moral fiber of our society and I hope, through Virginia's story, we will all be inspired," Marañon said.

Numerous readers have also called because to offer help to Rojo (inquiries may be made at the Inquirer Visayas office or phone numbers 033-4-16-9147 and 032-401-4488).

A CAR is turned into an unrecognizable heap of metal after it was crushed in a collision with two trucks in Tayabas City, Quezon.

Cotabato, Bataan, Tayabas mishaps kill 20

THIRTY PEOPLE DIED IN A rash of road accidents in North Cotabato, Bataan and Quezon on Tuesday and yesterday.

In North Cotabato, nine people were dead and nine others were injured when the truck they were riding fell into a five-meter deep ravine and smashed into a tree in M'lang early yesterday.

M'lang Mayor Joselito Piñol said the truck, which was cruising Mendalan-M'lang Highway, was on its way to Polomolok, South Cotabato, when it rammed and fell into the ravine before smashing into a mahogany tree.

Most passengers of the truck were thrown off the vehicle, he said.

In Tayabas City in Quezon, four persons were killed and two others were injured in a three-vehicle roadmap on the diversion road of the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Isabang on Tuesday.

M'lang Mayor Joselito Piñol said the truck, which was cruising Mendalan-M'lang Highway, was on its way to Polomolok, South Cotabato, when it rammed and fell into the ravine before smashing into a mahogany tree.

Most passengers of the truck were thrown off the vehicle, he said.

The seven dead in Bataan were all working for the Doing In Group of Companies, which manufactures bags for export to Korea and Japan.

They were in a van driven by Roman Marian Shin, who tried to overtake a tricycle on the Roman Highway when it collided with the bus, police said.

In Tayabas City, SPO1 Wilfredo Martinez, Tayabas police investigator, said a truck loaded with steel bars and hauled when lost its brakes and slammed into a car and another truck.

The driver of the first truck died on the spot while three passengers of the car were killed.

One of the car passengers died of loss of blood as rescuers lacked equipment to remove him from the wreck.

The wreck of the diversion road in Tayabas City to Sariaya, Quezon, has now earned the tag "killer highway," being the site of numerous fatal accidents in the past. Carlo Aguilar and Wilfredo Mayhilar, Inquirer Mindanao; Greg Bañaladas, Inquirer Central Luzon and Delfin F. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE VAN that figured in a crash with a bus in Lilo, Bataan, that killed seven people, including two Koreans.

THE CENTER bus ran on its side after it collided with the van at left photo in Bataan. No one was hurt in the bus.

Bulacan back to work after SC 'status quo' order on gov war

CITY OF MALOLOS—PROVINcial government employees on Wednesday dismantled steel railings and removed trucks that had barricaded all five major roads leading to the provincial capital.

True to his word, incumbent Gov. Joselito Mendoza ordered employees to return to work, after a weekend standoff between his supporters and those of Roberto Pagdanganan Jr. that sparked government inaugurations on Monday and Tuesday.

Mendoza gave the order on Tuesday as soon as he received word that the Supreme Court had allowed him to keep his post for at least seven more days, or until March 16.

The yellow steel railings and vans erected in front of the capitol grounds, which accommodated close to 6,000 Mendoza supporters, had disappeared.

Traffic flow

The alternate roads that brought traffic jams had been cleared of hectares of vehicles and heavy engineering equipment.

The Supreme Court ended the standoff on Tuesday with a seven-day status quo order, until it decides whether to allow Pagdanganan to assume the governorship.

At a press conference in San Juan, Metro Manila, Pagdanganan urged the SC to decide on the case quickly.

But at a media forum in Club Filipino in Greenhills, the former governor said he was confident he would win the case.

"We've always believed in the rule of law," Pagdanganan said.

He asked leaders of the Liberal Party Mendoza's party to stay away from the issue because it was just between him and Mendoza.

The Commission on Elections declared Pagdanganan winner of the 2007 elections, and had served Mendoza his week a writ of execution that installed Pagdanganan to the post. This led to the standoff.

Weary supporters

Some of the people who manned the barricades, however, welcomed the Supreme Court order, claiming they had grown weary of the conflict.

Lobi Santos, 50, said she traveled to the capitol from Barangay Tarnate in San Miguel town, to show her support to Mendoza but that the effort was tiring.

"We are very fatigued. We had spent so little time at home, that we wanted to show support for Governor Junjun. We would accept (that Pagdanganan's) assumption as the post if the court says it's proper," he said.

Law enforcers were also paralyzed by the standoff.

On Monday night, the Malolos City engineering office tried to remove the large trucks and backhoes positioned at the south entrance of the capitol compound, but members allied with Mendoza and policemen assigned to their towns, rushed to prevent the barricades.

Gutierrez-Reyes-Estrella, Inquirer Central Luzon and Ed Sayo in Manila

Sorsogon congressman convicted of graft posts bail

LEGAZPI CITY—THE SORSOgon congressman convicted of graft by the Sandiganbayan has posted bail.

Rep. Jose Solis, sentenced to up to 18 years in prison for graft and falsification of public documents, paid a P64,000 bail bond.

The Sandiganbayan on March 2 convicted him of graft and falsification of public documents for wrongly classifying a government car to favor a private claimant more than 10 years ago.

At a press conference on Saturday, Solis said he would appeal his conviction, insisting he was innocent.

He said his conviction by the Sandiganbayan was politically motivated and timed for the election period.

Solis is running for governor of Sorsogon against Raul Lee, whom Solis sought to disqualify in the gubernatorial race.

Solis said his political rivals dug up the case at the Sandiganbayan and timed their pleadings to ensure that he got convicted months before the elections on May 10.

"They tried to make my supporters believe that I will be arrested and put in jail, and their votes would not be counted and wasted," said Solis.

Solis was chief of the National Mapping Resource Information Authority in 1998.

He said he was confident that the Sandiganbayan decision would be eventually overturned. Blue S. Arguelles, Inquirer Southern Luzon

PNP chief: I won't support Bangit if ...

From page A1

AT EASE PNP Director General Jesus Versoza answers questions from editors and reporters during his visit in the InQuirk office in Makati City late Tuesday night. At left is PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina

eluding failure of elections. We are getting ready with our legal arsenal," he said.

Even his close ties in Malacañang Executive Secretary Ronaldo Puno, one of Ms Arroyo's most trusted lieutenants, will not sway him into obeying illegal orders, he said.

Asked what he would do if Bangit installed Ms Arroyo as holdover president after June 30 in case of failure of elections, the PNP chief said he would seek guidance from the Supreme Court.

Ms Arroyo's term ends on June 30 when the newly-elected President takes his oath of office.

Some sectors have expressed fears that sabotaging the automated elections either through dummy power outages on Election Day or manipulation of results could lead to failure of elections in which no new president is proclaimed by June 30.

What would he say to Ms Arroyo if she herself ordered him to let her remain in Malacañang after June 30? He said: "Ma'am, I think it's not right."

Ms Arroyo is accused of corruption, violations of human rights, among other charges, and may face suits after she steps down from office as no immunity for a congressional seat in Pampanga, which she is expected to win, is aimed at giving her some lot of immunity, according to analysts.

Bangit's appointment as new Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff fueled speculations that Ms Arroyo would try to hold on to power by using the military in disrupting the coming elections.

A member of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1979, Bangit took over the AFP leadership from Gen. Victor Ibrado who bowed out of service yesterday after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56. (See story on Page A1.)

Optics August Moon

Versoza downed insinuations that Ms Arroyo might appoint Director Roberto Rosales, Metro Manila police chief, to replace him because part of the so-called "Oplan August Moon."

The purported plan was supposedly aimed at installing members of PMA Class 1978, which adopted Ms Arroyo as its "minadi" (classmate), in key positions in the PNP and AFP to let the President have total control of the police and the military.

Ambassadorial post

Versoza dismissed as speculation stories that he was offered an ambassadorial position for him to opt for an early retirement and let Rosales take the helm of the PNP.

"This is actually the first time that I heard of such rumors," he said, smiling.

Versoza said he was here on finishing his police career on Dec. 25 (his 56th birthday) while working for the attainment of the PNP's Integrated Transformation Program.

"I want to leave the PNP as a more credible, efficient and competent organization. That would be my legacy," he said.

Power outages

Rumors about the looming failure of elections were further amplified by power outages across the archipelago and questions over the ability of the Comelec to conduct the country's first automated elections nationwide.

The PNP has been talking with other sectors to ensure the orderly conduct of the local and national elections.

Asked if the PNP could protect the people in the event of an election failure, he answered: "Yes, definitely that we need your support."

Guard vs deliberate delay

Versoza urged the public to stay vigilant and help the police in guarding against groups trying to damage the country's democratic institutions.

Aside from the automated election system, there to five polling precincts were clustered into one, Each clustered precinct would have about 1,000 registered voters.

The Comelec said it decided to "cluster" the precincts to save on the cost of leasing the voting and counting machines.

In previous elections, in which voting and counting were done manually, there were about 200 voters for every precinct.

"Some groups or politicians might order their supporters to intentionally stay longer outside the polling area to cast their ballots at present others from voting," Versoza said.

"If that happens, then we will have problems there," he added.

Manual voting areas

The police will strictly monitor areas where the Comelec might implement manual voting, according to Versoza.

He said election commissioners would furnish the PNP with the list of these places in the next few days.

The police and the military are closely working with the Comelec in enforcing election laws, according to the PNP chief.

"Everything we are doing, such as the conduct of checkpoints, the enforcement of the gun ban and busting the extortionists of politicians, are aimed at ensuring the success of the elections," Versoza said.

Asked what would constitute an illegal act, he replied:

"The capture of government agencies, the violations of the right on domicile and even the takeover of the media."

Bangit: I never received illegal orders from GMA

From page A1

was still Vice President.

Defending his Commander-in-Chief, Bangit said he had "so much respect" for Ms Arroyo because "never have I received illegal orders from her."

"I'm sorry," he added. "I'm sorry if that is not what you want to hear, but that is the truth."

Addressing fears triggered by her appointment of her most trusted officer in the top post in the AFP, Ms Arroyo has promised that she would step down as scheduled in June and that her administration would see to a "smooth transition" to the succeeding administration.

"General Bangit will always put the nation first in performing his duties as he upholds the Constitution and protect our citizens," the President said to a speech after at yesterday's ceremonial takeover of Bangit from the outgoing AFP chief, Gen. Victor Ibrado.

Ms Arroyo said her obligation, as President was to maintain peace, order and stability, and that her appointment of Bangit would "provide the continuity required to keep our nation stable and strong."

She said that while leaders were "transients," the authority and responsibility "endure as they are transferred to another leader."

"So too is our entire administration devoted to ensure a smooth transition to a new government," she said. "The people come first."

In his farewell speech, Ibrado reminded the soldiers to "actively work" for credible elections and not get fixated on their being partisan and to help govern.

"It distracts us from our jobs ... Our interest is our people, and that is what we should think about day and night," Ibrado said.

Unlikely scenario

Bangit said he was honored to lead the military. But he conceded that his appointment came at "a very delicate time," when the AFP was reacting to deadline to crush the communist insurgency, and the nation was preparing for its first automated elections.

The May elections are so "critical," he said, "that all possible scenarios, even the most unlikely scenarios that I can have to observe democracy, have been brought to the fore."

He lamented that critics viewed his appointment as the "price of loyalty" to Ms Arroyo, and tried to banish perception that his military career took a

HAIL TO THE CHIEFS President Arroyo salutes on as outgoing AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado (left) and his successor Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit exchange salutes.

HONOR PARADE Army soldiers show their skill in honor of the "Emperor," Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit.

fine turn when he became PSG commander.

"What happened to my years of work and sacrifice?" he said. "I have done my duty well. But ever since I left PSG, every time I get promoted, people think that I was there either because I hasintened or I will be used for something illegal."

Struggle and sacrifice

Bangit said his military career began in the "struggle and sacrifice" he endured in the separatists from his family as a young lieutenant and, later, in the battlefields.

"I rose from the ranks just by doing my best every single day ... despite the sight of death among my comrades, the imperfections of our organization and the absence of appreciation from my countrymen," he said.

Bangit was appointed Army chief in May 2009, when Ibrado was named AFP chief of staff.

Before then, he headed the Southern Luzon Command, the Intelligence Service of the AFP and the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, among others.

Bangit acknowledged that it was reasonable for the nation to exercise "extreme caution over" during his appointment, particularly with the image of the AFP tainted by "some unfortunate events in history."

2004 presidential poll

It was an apparent reference to allegations that some ranking officers were involved in the purported fraud that attended the victory of Ms Arroyo over her then rival, actor Fernando Poe Jr., during the 2004 presidential election.

The President said that the AFP be spared from politics, saying it had moved on and improved itself over the years.

"Outside all the hues, controversies and issues, I want to assure each and every Filipino that I am for the democratic exercise of democracy," he said, adding:

"I will do everything in my power to fight for the ramparts of democracy ... We will always be on the side of what is good and what is right."

Passing progress on

With less than four months to go before her term ends in June, Ms Arroyo said she would "set the foundation" focus on governance.

She stressed the importance of passing on her administration's accomplishments and progress "to the new leaders, to continue the march forward."

"The global recession permitted that economic growth from really reaching the poor ... as we hoped and planned," she said. "But the progress we made can be passed on for the next administration to build on," she said.

Ms Arroyo said she would leave the nation "in a better shape than we found it." "For example, she said, the country was "safer" because of "the great performance of the AFP."

"We are optimistic and hopeful about the future of this nation," she said, referencing her deep commitment to "a smooth transition to a new government."

"So we have heard from [Ibrado and Bangit], we can count on the Armed Forces to help us ensure that our democracy works for the future of our nation's children," she added.

Co-terminus with GMA

But Liberal Party senatorial candidate Rufino Biazon pointed out that Bangit's term should end when his commander in chief's term ends on June 30.

"He should understand himself that he will only serve for the remainder of the term of the one who appointed him," Biazon said. "After all, the next President would have authority and prerogative to replace him."

Biazon said the soldier Bangit declared that he would step down together with Ms Arroyo, the sooner he would gain the public trust.

"He should consider the conduct of clean, orderly and peaceful elections and a smooth transition of power as the ultimate accomplishment in his entire career as a military officer. He would be redeemed from the stain of the Garci [election fraud] issue and suspicions of being an administration puppet," Biazon said.

Renato Reyes Jr., the secretary general of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, expressed concern over Bangit's appointment.

"No matter how professional Bangit may claim he is, his association with Ms Arroyo's clique tells those claims. Some may say that it is selfish, but how can you not be . . . worried?" Reyes said in a text message to this reporter.

Fixated

But Malacañang does not share the fears raised by certain quarters concerning Bangit's appointment. Mr Ronaldo Puno's spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said in a text message.

Saludo said many people were looking forward to The May elections and a peaceful transition of government.

"Unfortunately, perhaps you can never dispel what is on the minds of some of them because they seem to be fixated on a certain perspective," he said.

Commenting on Bangit's speech, Saludo said he hoped that critics would stop clogging the military into politics.

He reminded politicians that the military was serving the country faithfully and was fortified by institutions that it was not doing its job.

"Let's not make their jobs hard by making statements that are not right and only serve to destroy the image of soldiers," he said. With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Nikko Dizon

Healthy Gin Kings source of joy for Jong

By Maong B. Castillo

SO FAR, JONG UICHICO IS HAVING NONE of the problems that besieged his flamboyant friend-a-year in the last PBA tournament.

"So far, so good," Uichico told the business yesterday shortly after a practice game against Alaska at Makati.

Although his boys lost by four points, Uichico was upbeat of his Gin Kings' chances in the coming Fiesta Conference because all his cases are headed in the right direction.

"I just hope it stays that way," added the multi-titled assistant, who is gunning for a second title in three years in the import-flavored, season-ending event with reinforcements from Disney.

Reigning MVP Jayjay Helterbrand and Mark Caguioa, Gianforcis Jones' and—after an one exclusivity of the Philippine Cup because of varying leg injuries, are now 100-percent fit and Uichico couldn't be more that the duo will again play a great role in the Kings' coming stint.

Giordan were this tournament two years ago with a 7-foot reinforcement in Chris Alexander, a gem of an import unveiled by the Kings who are hoping that they have found another diamond in the rough in Disney.

"He's not flashy, but he is very hardworking and he is very effective," Uichico said, even as he expressed some sort of disappointment that he wasn't able to land Alex Cabagnot from Air21 to address his backcourt need.

The well-spoken coach is also confident that he can give Rizzy Ok Orizaga a second wind in his career.

"I know what they (reporters) have been saying, that 'Rizzy is done and that 'Rizzy is lazy and all of those things," Uichico said. "But to me, he is a player that complements what the team already has."

Meanwhile, rarely three returning imports are in the official list—Gabriel Freeman of the defending champion San Miguel Beermen, burly Ati Lewis of Shin or Shine and 6'6 Cl-O-Ja's James Penny.

Alaska will parade very NBA D-League standout Hassan Simpson, Talk 'N Text will have Eric Hicks and Air21 will be harnessed by Larry Hickerson.

NBA REPORTS: Dallas G Mark Pl. (c) 107, Philadelphia 96, Orlando 115, LA Lakers 87, Houston 86, Washington 101, Utah 112, Chicago 102, Milwaukee 91, Detroit 89, Portland 108, Sacramento 97

LAKERS' Kobe Bryant goes up against Raptors' Linas Kleiza, Bryant has a 17-foot fadeaway jumper with 1.9 seconds left to give the Lakers a 109-107 win and end their three-game losing streak. AP/JEFF

Pharex seeks semifinals vs Addmix today

PHAREX IS COMPLETE COACH ARON CRUZ to capacity the Matadors to show their "killer instinct" course when they gear for the first semifinal berth against AdeMix in the PBL PG Flex-Xtreme Pinecrest Cup today.

The Matadors, whose new nickname gave not present players from University of the Philippines, also aim to pick up their fifth win and remain the sole lead in the 2 p.m. encounter of the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

"I told the boys that for us to win we have to come out with a killer instinct," said Cruz in the Matadors try to break away from a three-way logjam with the idle Duravision and Cainta Rice at 4-1.

Jhord Lagondi, still out of the top four at 2-3, hopes to keep its own semifinal bid alive against the struggling Brew C in the second game at 4 p.m.

"We're not out of danger," said Jhord coach Carlo Tan. "It lot of things had been fulfilled for us—our rebounding, our defense and just finding a group of guys who can provide stability."

But the Cough Busters will try to build on their 79-71 upset decision over Cebu Energy Drink last two days ago, where Rob Labagnita and Mark Cardiz (center) in the victory that kept them in the Final Four race.

Only the top four squads at the end of the single-round elimination will advance to the semifinals of the short tournament expected to be finished at the end of the month.

Ranked by Wendy Co, the Matadors are coming off a surprise 95-88 decision of the erstwhile unbeaten Canada Blue to grab a share of the lead last Saturday.

AdeMix rode Jon Ibanes, Gough, reports his own collegiate standout led by Jerish Cainada and Gio Calaunan to step up to the crucial rounds.

"We can't relax," said Ibanes of the Tenderfoxes, who hold a fifth-running 3-3 card.

Alexander, PBL chair Ching Co, cross of Pascual Laboratories announced that the board will only tackle the requested resignation of commissioner Chino Trinidad upon the latter's return from the United States.

"We can't discuss his planned resignation because there's no official letter yet," Cuenca said in a statement. Jasmine M. Payo

STANDINGS	W	L
Pharex	4	1
Cainta	4	1
Cignal	4	1
Cebu	3	2
Hapee	3	2
AdeMix	3	2
Alaska	2	3
Brew C	1	4
Agimat	0	5

GAMES TODAY
(Ynares Center, Pasig)
1 p.m.—AdeMix vs Pharex (Calaunan vs Ibanes)
4 p.m.—Brew C vs Hapee (Legondi)

Patrombon gains semis in Thailand

PATROMBON

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FILIPINO JUNIOR TENNIS STANDOUT Jason Patrombon displayed patience and consistency in coasting Hallwood American Campbell Johnson, 2-6, 7-5, 6-3, yesterday to move into the round of 16 in the Grade 1 ITF/USTA junior tennis championships in Nonthaburi, Thailand.

The 17-year-old Patrombon advanced against third-seed Dominic Thiem of Austria, ranked among the top 30 in the world, who downed German Hendrik Hlinka, 6-4, 6-2.

"Our strategy paid off and all the training was put to good use," said Patrombon's coach, former Davis Cupper Manny Tecson, in an e-mail. "Jason was aggressive all the way and I kept telling him to rally the ball 6x times or more."

Patrombon dominated Johnson, rated No. 90 in the world, after a three-hour duel under the sun.

Patrombon recovered to a 3-0 lead in the third set, but Johnson rallied and even grabbed a 4-3 advantage.

"His teammates were cheering very loudly to bring his spirit up," wrote Tecson of the American. "I shouted to Jason that it is his own soul to control during aggression."

Patrombon, last year made the quarterfinals of the Grade A Osaka Mayor's Cup-World Super Juniors, bowed his soul and regained his strength to break his foe at love.

RP Patriots receive ABL championship rings

By Cedell P. Tupas

KUALA LUMPUR—THE PHOTOS CAME from almost everyone in the ballroom, including the Malaysian billionaire famous for his brilliant business sense.

The Philippine Patriots were honored for winning the title of the maiden Asean Basketball League season on a night awash with pomp and pageantry at the posh Garden Southern Bandar.

Looking dapper in their barong regalia, the Patriots received the silver and gold championship rings from Malaysian business tycoon Tony Fernandes, the prime investor of the league.

"It's an honor for me to present the first Asean Basketball League champion, the Philippine Patriots," Fernandes said in a speech that included some remarks not to officials from league backers Government Linvest and Air Asia.

Patriots playmaker Warren Shafer, some reported Most Valuable Player of the finals, after averaging five points and five assists in the 3-0 sweep of Indonesia's Satria Muda Britama, while Jason Dixon, the 6-foot-6 American reinforcement, was adjudged Best Import.

Shafer won over teammates Rob Wainright and Jerwin Gaco. Dixon, who

TEAM owners Ronphoy Cojuangco and Mikee Romero (center) share the championship trophy during the ring ceremony for the Patriots. With them are players and officials of the squad, led by head coach Louie Alas (left) and team manager Erick Arevalo (third from left)

scored 12 points and 10 rebounds, beat Satria Muda Britama's Hakim Eldin and Kyle Jeffers of the Singapore Slingers on top import plum.

The Thailand Tigers Amputees Lottomidgame runs the regular-season MVP.

The night, however, belonged to the Patriots, a team composed of former PBA players and collegiate stars, who marched their way to a total of 16 wins in 20 games in the inaugural season.

"We actually thought that the title would be a walk in the park but we were made to work very hard for this championship," said Patriots co-team owner Bambey Cojuangco.

Mikee Romero, the other owner, paid tribute to the players for "sacrificing a lot" to achieve the championship.

"I would like to congratulate the players because they really worked hard for this. This trophy is a product of their sacrifice," said Romero, who also owns stake in Philippine Basketball League (the.

The Patriots however are facing some player revamp for the coming season starting in October with several players reportedly trying out for Barako Bull in the PBA and marksman Elmer Espiritu, Sid Acosta and Jimmy Bardon applying for the pro draft.

Shafer, Gaco, Wainright and Christian Cuecuec are among the players eyed by Barako Bull, which recently signed a jersey deal with Harbour Centre, a company owned by Romero.

SPORTSWATCH

Tiu eyes drag racing lead

DEFENDING CHAMPION JONATHAN TIU turns a second straight win in the Malaysian Racing Circuit Drag Strip on Saturday for the third legal the Magnolia Formaster National Drag Racing Championship Series.

The MRC Drag Strip is one of Tiu's favorite hunting grounds as he has won three times, finished once holding the fastest MRC track record time of 10.421 seconds.

But now that the Filipino stars in the team for the second times, his MRC track record and his set-up is 'B the team condition of the MRC Drag Strip in his quest to arrest sole lead from Anthony Sia.

Fabayang tackles Korean

TWO-TIME SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES bronze winner Eduard Folayang will defend his Universal Reality Combat Championship welterweight title in the ICE 45 MMA XIII "Awakening" on March 27 at the A. Venue Events Suites Makati.

Folayang is undefeated in his UFCC matches the past two years. He manages to extend his streak against Korean Chong Soo-ya.

Another fight to watch out for is the comeback bout of former fly champion Richard Lumapas against Angelo Friend.

HALL OF FAME: Jerrold Narciso (red), a.k.a. The Baldvinsons, hands the trophy to Jose Ramon Dayrit Pharmaceuticals' Alexis Canada (right). Canada finished the PBR all-Filipino race in 1 Phoenix and 1 minute. Second to fourth-placers were Randy Bautista (1:0 0.627), Jennifer Lazarenas (1:0 0.627) and Jun Roxanne Lazarenas (1:0 0.627) and Jun Roxanne Lazarenas (1:0 0.627).

RACING ZONE
By TOP SPEEDS
At San Lazaro G.P.

A promise of African savagery

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HE WAS PERFECTLY SURE THEY'D get Joshua Clottey but, not knowing whether the knockout would come in the first or ninth round, pressure trainer Freddie Roach used no straight nouns to explain what the mysterious Ghanaian was all about.

Clottey's best shot is an uppercut, Roach said.

"His second best shot is a headbutt," Roach quipped in the same breath.

Shortly arrived at the head of Team Pacquiao in Dallas, Roach did not have to explain they were ready for the worst.

***

On the other hand, Lenny DeAvena, Clottey's mainly opposite trainer, assure they would win by knockout.

How?

DeAvena, who has worked as cutman for Manny Pacquiao several times, refused to explain.

Of course, that was impossible, said premier columnist Quintin Dominon.

Dominon also suggested it would suit her beyond Clottey to resort to foul tactics on fight night.

***

"Clottey only 1 KO in last 11 fights since 2005," Dominon said in a text message the other day. "His KO rate is 37 percent of time while Pacquiao is 70 percent. Clottey only 3 fights since 2008, Manny 5."

What makes Clottey worthy is his durability, Dominon said.

The Ghanaian has never been KO'd.

"He has impeccable defense and has had no difficulty handling southpaws," Dominon explained.

***

Is that all?

"No, what makes Clottey truly dangerous is his record as an instinctively dirty fighter."

Records showed Clottey's record by fights had been smeared with blood and vileness.

"The most dangerous weapon in Clottey's arsenal is unchecked, silly Clottey's head," warned Dan Bradley in an article for Ring Magazine. "The sheer contact of it is menacing, the forehead bulging slightly as if nature designed Clottey with the specific intention of giving other fighters headaches and headaches."

Clottey and his trainer predictably disagreed.

They seemed singularly sure they could beat Roach and Pacquiao using clean, legit tactics.

***

On the other hand, Roach said speed, speed, speed, will be Pacquiao's main weapon to nullify Clottey's size edge.

Convinced Team Clottey: "We won't be caught going their pace, there'll be no head-to-head fights—we will engage in calculated exchanges."

Pacquiao, no stranger to foul ones, is all set to win it neat and legit.

Pacman will do it the noble way of my devoted Filipino warriors.

Not Clottey.

The African jungle cat, rough as a truck tire, may not survive without spitting venom.

Pennisi's Pinoy, rules Supreme Court

THE SUPREME COURT HAS RULED THAT PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL Association player Michael Alfe "Mick" Pennisi is a Filipino citizen contrary to the contention of the Department of Justice.

The high court denied the DOJ's petition and affirmed the September 30, 2005 decision of the Court of Appeals that ruled the Australian-raised San Miguel Beer center to be a Filipino citizen. — Jaime Pazziugan

Zilrie Teddyvic S. Makabenlas
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ortaiz

SPORTS

Roach: Clottey won't find us

Clottey will send Pacman to hospital, says cook

By Roy Luarca

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS—THE HYPE AND hysteria surrounding Manny Pacquiao continues as The Event heats up.

Obliging more than 400 fans and the press that have gathered at the Gaylord Texan Hotel Tuesday, Pacquiao put on a dazzling display of footwork, hand speed, rhythmic movement and astounding stamina as to underscore his status as overwhelming favorite against Ghana's Joshua Clottey in their World boxing Organization welterweight title fight this Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

Egged on by entertainment appliances and dissents of "Manny! Manny!" from his fans at the enormous Exhibition Hall, the Fighter of the Decade put on a full-scale run there, sliding and gliding while throwing a series of punches.

Pacquiao said his speed will be the key to victory, adding that he and Roach are confident that Clottey won't be able to stand when he gets tagged by body shots, followed by blows to the head and back to the stomach.

"We'll wait for you to throw a combination and then, when you're clipped, he'll throw back," said four-time Trainer of the Year Roach. "So if you stand in front of him, you're an idiot. We're not going to do that. He's not going to be able to. Read us." (See related story on Page A2)

After warming up, Pacquiao, assisted by conditioning expert Alex Ariza, did the pad work with Roach.

Ariza noted that Pacquiao stopped using plyometric exercises two weeks ago, but resumed upon the camp's arrival in Grapevine.

Pacquiao proceeded to jump rope before completing his workout with more exercises.

With the crowd refusing to leave the venue, Pacquiao decided to approach them and sign autographs.

Meanwhile, Randy Prados, lead vocalist of rock band Journey, has been chosen to sing the national anthem. Prados will be singing here Thursday.

San Antonio referee Richard Steiner has been chosen to officiate The Event. He has more than 300 fights, including 50 world title bouts, tacked under his belt. Steiner was also the third man on the ring when Juan Manuel Marquez beat Juan Diaz for a version of the lightweight championship last year.

Two Filipino prospects, bantamweight Edon Sumsong and featherweight Michael Nevarez, and former Pacquiao victim, David Diaz are also seeing action in the undercard.

Diaz, who was knocked out by Pacquiao in the ninth round when they clashed in 2008, will try to regain the WBC lightweight title against reigning titlist Humberto Soto of Mexico in the main supporting bout.

Sumsong will be battling Colombia's Rhustin Pastrana in the opinion while Nevarez will be toughing with local foe Joe Hinojosa in the second round.

Other TV matches will be the 10-round collision between Mexicans Alfonso Gomez and Jose Luis Castillo for the WBC Continental Americas welterweight title.

Also on tap is the middleweight battle between Michael Medina and Jobert Bobby.

FORMER Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Michael Irvin (right) persuades Pacquiao during the Filipino idol's media workout in Grapevine, Texas. — AP

Pacquiao-Clottey tiff headed for sellout

By Roy Luarca

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS—FOR BIG-Shooter Jerry Jones, Manny Pacquiao is the money man of boxing.

This is the reason why the owner of the Dallas Cowboys and the $1.2 billion Cowboys Stadium is co-promoting The Event between Pacquiao and Joshua Clottey on March 13.

The 67-year-old Jones, who struck it rich in oil and gas exploration, is so eager in his belief that any fight featuring the Fighter of the Decade will be valuable.

Bob Arum of Top Rank, which is co-promoting Pacquiao-Clottey, said that only 4,000 out of 40,000 tickets are left for Saturday's fight.

Arum and Jones remained confident of a sellout due to the universe the fight has generated, and cody among Filipino-Americans for Hispanics, Mexicans and Americans as well.

"It's like a Super Bowl," said Jones of his first major boxing promotion.

Jones, who drew 2,500 fans in his first fight promotion in 1984 in Little Rock, Arkansas, said he advises Pacquiao as a great athlete said a great person.

The main reason that I wanted the Pacquiao-O'Neal [Shaquille O'Neal vs Mosley] fight was Manny," said Jones of the botched negotiations between the named and former pound-for-pound kings. "He Pacquiao] is the draw.

"Not to criticize when that didn't work, I still had the interest of getting him here at all cost and whoever he fights," added Jones.

This early, Pacquiao-Clottey is certain to break attendance record in Pacquiao's previous fight in the United States, way over the 18,276 paying fans who watched Pacquiao-Erik Morales III in Las Vegas in 2006.

Noh slowing down Korean ace; Pucay 72

KUALA LUMPUR—KOREAN Jung Nor Noh Seung-rul maintained his red-hot form to share the opening round lead with Jessie Ong of Malaysia on six-under-par 66 at the British Open Championship International Pinoy Quality top-notch on Wednesday.

The 10-year-old Noh, winner of the Kinchiak Malaysian Open on Sunday, shot six eagles and seven birdies against a bogey and a double bogey at the Saujana Golf and Country Club to put himself in prime position for one of four tickets available to the British Open in July.

Ong carded a flawless round highlighted by six birdies to boost his hopes of a third appearance in the world's oldest Major.

Khor Peng rounded a 72 while Filipino competitor Angelo Que, one of four qualifiers here in 2008, was way back in the 73-man field.

Hiroyuki Fujita of Japan, the highest ranked player at 8th in the world, and Korean amateur Eri Chin, runner-up at the inaugural Asian Amateur Championship in China last year, shot matching 67s to tie individual position.

A further shot back are Wu Ashan of China and Thawatchai Whatchara of Thailand, who carded identical 68s.

Yesterday, from the 10th tee, Noh bounced back superbly from a double bogey on the 12th hole when he made a 25-foot eagle on the 13th hole.

— Antara Zone News

Aplus METRO
Editor Alexander S. Lumicao
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DID YOU KNOW

WHILE almost eight out of 10 Filipino men aged 15 and above are part of the labor force, only about five out of 10 Filipino women in the same age range are in the labor force.
Carl C. Abrahano, Inquirer Research

Police official hurt in ambush

Link between slay try, Mayor's killing probed

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A POLICE SUPERINTENDENT whose identification card was found in the car of murdered "jueteng" whistle-blower Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor last week was wounded in an ambush in Quezon City yesterday afternoon.

Chief Insp. Benjamin Herrozo, Quezon City Police District homicide chief, said Supt. Napoleon Corpuz sustained gunshot wounds in both arms when two men on a motorcycle fired at his Nissan Navara pickup on Magsaysay corner Marcelino Streets in Quezon City at around 12:45 p.m.

The area is near the Land Transportation Office (LTO) main office on East Avenue.

Corpuz, who is assigned at the Philip-

PAGE A20

3 Coast Guard men linked to rape axed

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THREE OF THE SIX PHILIPPINE COAST Guard (PCG) personnel who reportedly raped a woman following a drinking spree at the agency's office in Taguig City have been discharged from the service.

Adm. Wilfredo Tamayo, PCG commandant, said in a statement yesterday that the three enlisted men were found to have violated a rule which prohibits the drinking of liquor inside the agency's facilities.

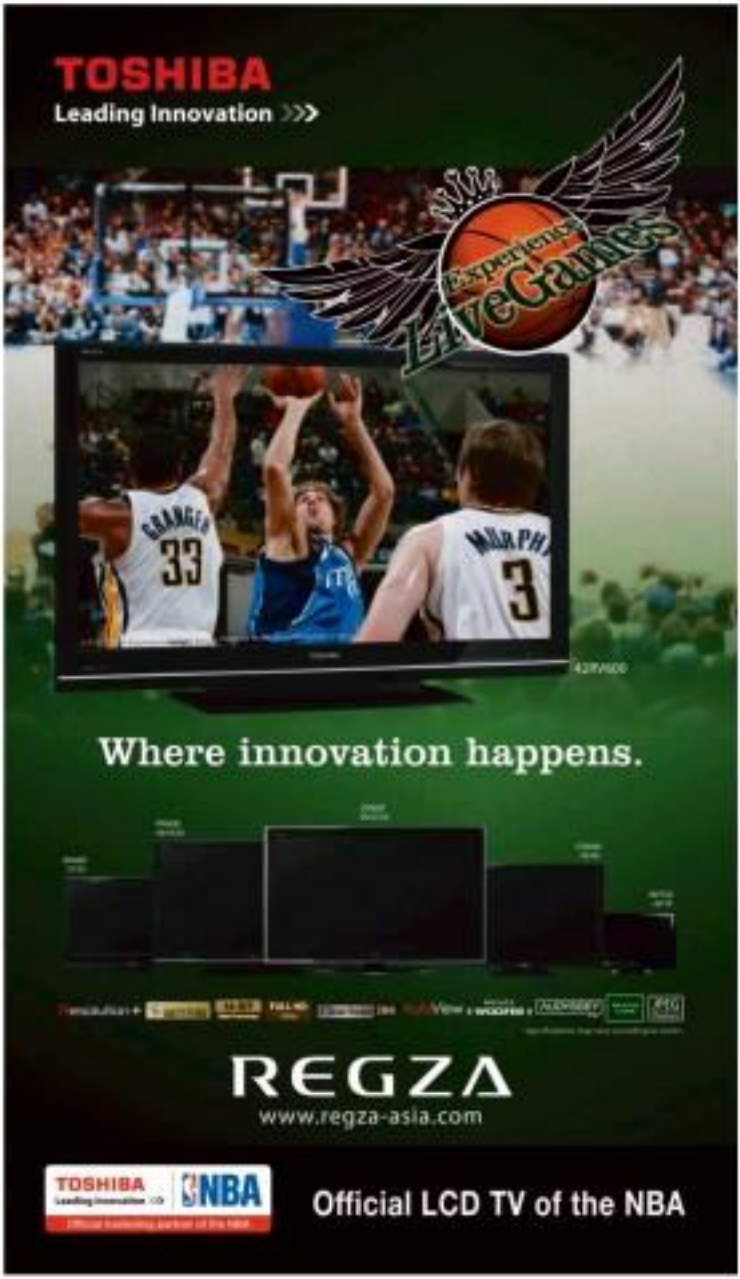
The rules also violated another rule which forbids its personnel from bringing civilians inside any Coast Guard station [illegible] by the Coast Guard, however, did not identify the three dismissed personnel.

Meanwhile, Lt. Cmdr. Armando Balilo, head of the PCG public information office, told the Inquirer that the other Coast Guard personnel, whom he also did not identify, were still being investigated.

"Two of them are relatives [of victim]. The third one was a roving officer when the alleged rape took place. Our investigators have yet to establish their involvement in the case," he said.

He added that the agency was "willing to turn the personnel over to the police should their culpability be established."

The victim, a resident of Tagaytay City filed charges against the six Coast Guard personnel after they reportedly raped her following a drinking spree on March 2 inside the Weapons, Communications, Electronics and Information Systems Services office in Lower Bicutan.



COA asks Binay, et al to explain 'deficiency' in 2009 projects worth ₱1.2B

By Nitz Calaya

THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA) has asked the Makati City government to explain why it implemented ₱1.2 billion worth of infrastructure projects last year without the approval of the city council.

State auditor Emilia Bocalan, director of the Makati COA, told the Inquirer that the agency sent an Audit Observation Memorandum (AOM) dated Feb. 18 to which it asked for an explanation from Mayor Jejomar Binay as well as the city secretariat and city budget officer.

Bocalan said that as of yesterday, he has yet to receive a reply from any of the three officials.

He added that should the explanation prove to be unsatisfactory, he would include this in the final report.

Bocalan's hesitation about the COA investigation came after they were given copies of the AOM by Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado who is running for mayor in May against Binay's son, Councilor Jejomar Erwin Tiangco Binay.

In the AOM, Bocalan asked Binay and the two other city officials to comment on the supposed "deficiency" in the 23 projects which were carried out in 2009 without the approval of the city council (about awarding officer's Mercado.

The memorandum cited a provision in Section 22 of the Local Government Code of 1991 which states that the treasurer may not enter into a contract in behalf of the local government without the prior authorization of the Sanggunian.

Asked if Binay requested the city council in the implementation of the projects, Rodriguez said, "It looks that way."

But he was quick to add that "there were no losses on the part of the city government. [although Binay] may have committed a procedural lapse."

Sought for comment, Joey Salgado, head of the city's information and community relations department, said that although the city government had yet to issue a formal reply, the city accountant and budget officers explained their side to COA in an exit conference two weeks ago.

More observation

"This is not yet a finding from COA but a mere observation. And pre-election natod by Mercado for his political purpose," he told the Inquirer on the phone.

He pointed out the city government had been implementing projects without the authorization of the city council for the past nine years since these had been already included in the budget appropriation.

"Vice Mayor Mercado is potentially part of the Binay administration in 2001 and in the previous years. He is also witnessing himself," Salgado said.

WHERE ARE THE TIRES! Pedestrians passing through Quintos Avenue near Padre Gil Street in Manila will note the shade provided by cars or trucks which were stopped down the other day. (PHOTOGRAPHER NAME)

Manila's bets sign pact for clean elections in May

By Tina G. Santos

CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR elective positions in Manila yesterday signed a peace covenant to ensure orderly elections in the city in May.

Held at the Manila Police District Headquarters on United Nations Avenue, the event was witnessed by supporters and officials of the city government, as well as police and Commission on Elections officials.

"Covenant Signing for Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections (HOPE) 2010," was attended by the local candidates led by three of seven mayoral bets, Mayor Alfredo Lim, former Environment Secretary Leo Alvarez and former Philippine National Police chief Avelino Razon.

Of the four vice mayoral candidates, only Councilor Ma. Lourdes "Bonjay" Isip-Garcia, women's running mate, attended the covenant signing.

The covenant warned that candidates and their supporters should refrain from engaging each other in violent standoffs, or else face disqualification.

The governor of Comelec Region 4, Capitol Region, chief Michael Dumolo was on hand to make the covenant binding, according to MPD director Chief Supt. Rodolfo Magdaong.

Another police official, who refused to be named, expressed hope that the signing of the agreement would ease the tension among the candidates and their supporters.

He said he was particularly referring to the tension apparently brewing between Lim and mayoralty aspirant Alvarez.

In his letter to Magdaong, Arenas lauded the efforts of the police to come up with the peace covenant even as he reminded them to be impartial and not to take sides during the entire campaign period.

He said the MPD Mobile Units have been receiving the name of the city's Department of Public Services, specifically in 3-10 Boulevard, Tondo, as the alleged disbursement campaign materials put up by his Bulusyon ng Maynila team.

Arenas said he also received information that some policemen have been harassing residents in the Blumentritt area for openly expressing support for his campaign. "I would like to request them to use yellow-colored items to be identified with the current administration.

"Policeh drivers have likewise been promised that they will be given assignment of their traffic violations if they show their support for the incumbent city officials," the former city mayor claimed.

"While we fully support and commit ourselves to this covenant, we are strongly reminding the police of their sworn duty to remain neutral," he added.

Lim denied Arenas's claim but said that he is open to holding an investigation. "Let the matter be investigated and charges be filed. Sino lang yung tatao ang sabihin niti, huwag yung mga barbaro nip dumarag (I hope they're telling the truth and that is not just a figment of their imagination.)"

Likewise, Lim urged Manila policemen to avoid engaging in partisan politics.

He vowed not to use the police force in his political campaign.

"I would rather lose the elections without using any of the [MPD] members than gain victory out of using them," Lim said. "Engaging in political activities is a violation of the Omnibus Election Code and might put the policemen's jobs on the line."

Lim expressed hope that the peace covenant will do away with dirty tactics.

"Let us all respect the will of the people and those right to exercise their right of suffrage, free from lies and any form of harassment," he added.

GOING SWIMMING Children jump into the Pasig River, using the landing of the Sta. Ana ferry station in Manila as a diving board. (PHOTOGRAPHER NAME)

A POLICEMAN examines the vehicle of Supt. Napoleon Campo who was wounded in an ambush in Quezon City on Wednesday. (PHOTOGRAPHER NAME)

Police official hurt . . .

From page A-9

pino National Police Personnel Holding and Administration Unit in Camp Crame, was in the news last week when an identification card bearing his name was found in the bullet-riddled vehicle of Mayor.

But Ebreo was refused to immediately link the attack on Campo to the robbery-kidnap's death.

Still under investigation

"We are in the process of investigating and we are looking into all possible leads and motives," he said.

Last July Campo led a raid on the LTO main office, resulting in the arrest of several employees said to be involved in the manufacture of fake license plates.

Based on witnesses' accounts, a man wearing a black T-shirt alighted from a red Mitsubishi Adventure. Using a high-powered firearm, he shot Campo as he was sitting in his pickup, shattering the windows on the driver's and passenger's side.

The gunman's then boarded a motorcycle which also did not have license plates and drove away with another man.

Witnesses said Campo managed to drive his vehicle away from the spot where he was shot although he stopped after a few blocks to seek the help of bystanders who took him to the Armed Forces Medical Center.

Stable

At press time, he was report ed to be in stable condition.

The police later recovered from Campo's vehicle an Armalite rifle, a cal. .45 pistol, ammunition, three cell phones, a wallet containing his driver's license and other personal belongings.

Jonellie Lapiz, a parking attendant who witnessed the shooting incident, said Campo was with a woman when he was ambushed.

The woman, however, did not report to be hurt as she was able to get out of vehicle without any assistance.

The police said they were looking for the woman, described by Lapiz as in her 30s, who disappeared after the shooting incident.

One long, hot summer day: 5 fires hit Manila

By Tito S. Sarao

A 12-HOUR FIRE INCIDENT RECORD was set in Manila yesterday as a total of 5 fires razed commercial establishments and residential areas in the city, including a fire that destroyed the Manila Central University (MCU) campus in Caloocan City.

The fire, which started at 6:30 a.m. at the unit occupied by Jacinto Ong, who also owned a junkshop on the ground floor, quickly spread to houses made of light materials that were close by.

The first happened around 2:30 p.m. on Soriano Street in Sampaloc, destroying 20 shanties.

Residents said the fire could have been originated from an unattended stove.

From Sampaloc, the firefighters rushed to Magdalena Street in the district of Leveriza to put out the fire that razed at least 40 houses made of light materials.

Authorities are looking into reports that several children were seen playing with a lighted candle before the fire broke out.

Five minutes after the fire was put out in Malate, a third fire struck another residential area, this time in Capulong, Tondo.

Except for Arnie Mayo, 44, who was hit by falling debris as he was trying to save some of his belongings during the fire in Sampaloc, no one else was reported injured.

Hired assassins and the gun ban

ON TARGET Ramon Tulfo

ANOTHER VICTIM OF HIRED killers is Lowel Llanel, 39, a businessman, who was gunned down by two men riding in tandem on a motorcycle.

Llanel is the 6th victim of gun-for-hire riding on motorcycles in Metro Manila.

A small businessman is often used by hired killers because it's a getaway vehicle. It's fast and can easily zigzag its way through heavy traffic.

Last year, retired police inspector Supt. Wally Sombero was ambushed by four men riding in tandem on two motorcycles. He survived.

But the others were not so lucky, like Wilfredo "Boy" Mapa, a "jueteng" whistle blower.

Mapa was gunned down by motorcycle-riding men after he came from a casino one weeks ago.

* * *

I don't have the number of victims of hired killers, but from newspaper reports and second-hand accounts there should be scores of them.

Two months ago, a friend told me that while he was waiting for a ride to Subic-necta, he saw two men get down from a motorcycle and shoot a man in front of him, killing his daughter to collect.

A 72-year-old woman was killed by motorcycle-riding men while she was getting off a jeepney.

A former barangay official was killed by men on a motorcycle months ago.

When will the police go after gun-for-hire syndicates?

When the next victim is one of their own (who's fighting the tenure pole of the Philippine National Police, a congressman, or a congressman or a prominent person?

* * *

This is the best time for hired killers to make a killing (pun, the gun is intended for effect) because it's election season and the Commission on Elections (Comelec) has disarmed citizens from carrying firearms.

Some unscrupulous politicians and individuals may have contracted hired killers to get rid of their enemies.

Hired killers will have an easier time disposing of their contract targets who can't shoot back.

There's a saying that when you eat bus grass, only carabaos will have pain and good citizens won't have a chance to fight back.

* * *

The organizer of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) against condoms because it promotes promiscuity or casual sex is just like saying that a gun promotes violence. Both arguments are foolish.

It's according to how a condom or a gun is used that makes it good or bad.

The CBCP and Comelec are of the same mould.

* * *

Manila Judge Silvino Pampo Ii Ii has ruled that the President Arti-Smuggling Task Group (PASG) is illegal, lawless and unconstitutional.

This judge is encroaching the power of the President to form a task force to solve difficult problems.

But there's more to Pampilo's decision than meets the eye.

You see, Pampilo is a good friend of Presidente Cha-cha's husband Mike Arroyo, according to my sources in Malacañang.

Mike Arroyo's friends are the primary targets of the PASG. But President Gloria cruised previously to go after them, the same sources said.

If you don't see the connection, you're dense.

MetroBriefs

Congressional bet's security man killed

A BODYGUARD of a congressional candidate in Negros province was gunned down by motorcycle-riding assailants yesterday morning in front of a courthouse in Binangonan town, the police said. Investigators identified the victim as a bigwig Tarzan, 35, a security aide of lawyer-actor Mendoza, who is running for representative of Negros first district. The initial police account that Tapan, accompanied by his wife, was waiting for a passing tricycle at the Binangonan Municipal Trial Court in Binangonan, Cebu around 8 a.m. when two men on motorola motorcycle suddenly appeared and shot him repeatedly. Dead officer Lakbayan Tantanto said the incident happened so fast that police officers in the vicinity were not able to react immediately. "It happened in less than a minute. They shot him and they were gone. They did not even get off the motorcycle," he said. The victim was rushed to the Negros General Hospital but before he was transferred to the Negros Medical Mission, Dumlao Tapay for severe gunshot injuries. But he did not survive the trip and was pronounced dead on arrival. A staffer of Mendoza's organization, Bagong Lipat, confirmed that Tapan was the candidate's security aide, adding that Mendoza was planning to call a press conference to make an official statement about the matter. -TMT

Bali bomb brains confirmed dead

JAKARTA—INDONESIAN COUNTERterror authorities won international praise on Wednesday for killing a top-ranked Southeast Asian militant suspected of planning the deadly 2002 Bali bombings.

Police also revealed that bomb-making materials were found in one of two raids near Jakarta on Tuesday that killed fugitive Dulmatin and his two bodyguards.

Gen. Bambang Hendarso Danuri, Indonesia's police chief, told reporters on Wednesday that the bomb-vest set being prepared for President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's visit to Jakarta this month, but declined to elaborate on a potential target.

Dulmatin, a 39-year-old former mechanic trained by al-Qaeda in Afghanistan who used one name, was wanted for the suicide bombings that tore through two Bali nightclubs popular with Westerners, killing 202 people in Indonesia's deadliest terrorist attack. He was also blamed for the 2004 truck bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta that killed 11.

Dulmatin had been one of fourteen Asian most-wanted fugitives and was thought to have fled to the Philippines.

BIKE, GUN. Hendarso Danuri tells a news conference that DNA tests cleared Dulmatin was one of the three militants killed during a police raid near Jakarta on Tuesday. AP

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono used a speech to officials in the Australian capital of Canberra on Wednesday to confirm speculation that Dulmatin was one of three suspected militants killed in two raids claimed earlier that day before an Jakarta's southwestern outskirts on the country's main island of Java.

"Indonesian authorities will continue to hunt down terrorist down and do all we can to prevent them from harming our people," Yudhoyono said in a speech in Parliament House.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd praised Indonesia for making down the alleged master bombmaker of Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian affiliate of al-Qaeda. Some 88 Australians died in the Bali attacks.

"The breakthroughs that Indonesia has made in condemning various terrorist networks has been significant," Rudd told reporters.

Col. Bill Cushing, commander of US counterterrorism forces in the southern Philippines where Dulmatin allegedly fought in recent years with the al-Qaida-linked militant group Abu Sayyaf, congratulated Indonesia on an "excellent job."

"It's a great success, but as we have seen in Iraq, in Afghanistan and other places, you may remove one leader, but there may be someone who will step up to take his place," Cushing said.

The commander of the Philippine Marines, Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban, who for years has led US-backed offensives that have killed and captured several Abu Sayyaf leaders, said Dulmatin's death had made the region safer.

Sabban took credit for driving Dulmatin and his followers from the Philippines.

"It's good Indonesia got him. It proved that our operations are effective and we were able to drive him away and that's what we wanted to do," Sabban said. AP

MAYDA. He answered with male staffers

US solon admits, denies he groped aide

WASHINGTON—US CONGRESSMAN Rep. Eric Massa, who resigned from Congress amid sexual harassment allegations, offered unprecedented explanations for his behavior on Tuesday, acknowledging he groped a male staffer in a nonsexual way but later denying any groping.

In a pair of TV interviews, the upstate New York Democrat discussed wrestling with male staffers at his 50th birthday party and striking one of them.

The Washington Post, citing anonymous sources, reported on Tuesday that the House of Representatives ethics panel had been investigating allegations that Massa groped multiple male staffers in his office. Massa has previously denied that inappropriate sexual behavior was limited to using inappropriate language with staffers.

Massa's acknowledgment of inappropriate behavior have worsened Obama's majority Democratic struggle with others, mayors among their ones under despite pressing to draw up Congress when they come to power. AP

Israel says 'bad options' for Iran getting closer

UNITED NATIONS—THE TWO "bad options" for Iran—letting the country develop nuclear weapons or using force to stop it—are closer than they were a year ago, Israel's UN ambassador warned on Tuesday.

Gabriela Shalev told journalists at the UN that Israel still hoped diplomatic engagement and sanctions would halt Iran's push to become a nuclear power, but warned: "Our intelligence tells us ... that time is running toward this kind of nuclear capability, and it's not a matter of years."

She pointed out that Iran was already advancing than it was watching sanctions and that the level of enrichment was higher than revealed for civilian use.

Shalev said high-ranking Israeli and United States government and military leaders both in Washington and Jerusalem were currently discussing whether a military strike could stop Iran's nuclear program.

Israel's chief of staff is visiting Washington, while US Vice President Joe Biden is in Jerusalem.

Shalev said she was encouraged that Biden said Iran posed a threat to the US.

"I say veto there—Iran is a threat to the whole world," she added.

The US and key Western powers have circulated proposals for a fourth round of UN sanctions to step up pressure on Iran on suspected uranium enrichment and stop negotiations on its nuclear program.

Iran insists its nuclear program is peaceful, aimed solely at producing nuclear energy. But the West's concerns were heightened by a recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency that said Tehran may be making nuclear bombs.

Shalev said that China and Russia—both veto-wielding members of the country Council—still believed there was room for diplomacy.

"They still believe...and I respect it—that you have to exhaust all diplomatic efforts before you have those kind of sanctions that will affect the economy," she said. "They do not seem to fallen any hasten on the Iranian people." AP

WorldBriefs

Chinese editor punished for editorial

BEIJING—A Chinese newspaper editor said he has been punished for co-writing a bold editorial demanding reforms of China's unpopular household registration system, which critics say discriminates against farmers and other rural poor. Zhang Hong, a former deputy editor with the Beijing-based Economic Observer, said in a letter posted on the Wall Street Journal's website that he was "punished accordingly." The Eye Blank 1 editorial carried by 13 Chinese publications. AP

Biden's tour clouded by settlement plans

RAMALLAH—Israel's new plan to build 1,600 apartments for Jews in Palestinian-claimed east Jerusalem overshadowed Vice President Joe Biden's visit to the West Bank on Wednesday. Biden was to hold talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, in part to ease their doubts about the latest United States peace efforts. AP

University shooter said bosses unfair

COLUMBUS—An Ohio State University janitor who shot two supervisors, one fatally, and then killed himself had complained that he was being treated unfairly, although records show he slept on the job and was warned during his probation. Nathaniel Brown was days away from leaving his job when he opened fire with two handguns early Tuesday in a maintenance building at the largest university in the United States, police said. Mr. Brown, 51, had a criminal history that included serving about five years in prison on a charge of receiving stolen property, records show. He had about 4 or less job applications, and it wasn't immediately clear whether Ohio State had completed a background check on him. AP

Obama more popular than Congress

WASHINGTON—Americans have come to detest Congress even more deeply as it nears the end of a sadly fight over health care. But more than half still back President Barack Obama, a bright spot for a Democratic Party rounding on its leader to help stave off expected losses in elections this November. The latest Associated Press-GfK poll found that fewer than one-quarter of Congress think at any point in Obama's presidency. Support has dropped significantly since January's to a this-and 22 percent as the health-care debate has roiled Congress. Neither Republicans nor Democrats are safe, half of all people say they want to fire their congressman. AP

US-born capo fight for control of cartel

MEXICO CITY—Authorities say a United States-born hit man is fighting the battle for an elevated drug-trade foothold on the Gulf-Laredo cartel, marking another step for the first time an American has risen to the very top ranks of Mexican gangs. Tomas Pinzonen, head of the narcotics division of Mexico's federal police, said on Tuesday that Texas-born Edgar Valdez Villarreal, nicknamed "La Barbie," is battling Hector Beltran Leyva for control of the Beltran Leyva cartel. AP

Khmer Rouge sites preserved for tourism

PHNOM PENH—Cambodia will preserve 14 sites at the last bastion of the murderous Khmer Rouge, including the home of their leader Pol Pot, as tourist attractions, an official said on Wednesday. Following Cabinet approval last week, the sites at Anlong Veng will be protected from illegal actions by local people and illegal encroachment. Anlong Veng, about 300 kilometers north of Phnom Penh, fell to government forces in 1998 after nearly 20 years of fighting. AP

China prods US on climate change

BEIJING—China told the United States on Wednesday to make stronger commitments on climate change and provide environmental expertise and financing to developing nations. China's top climate change negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, acknowledged the current US administration's greater stress on greenhouse gas reductions, but said its pledges thus far fell short of expectations. AP

Dozen same-sex couple tie knot

WASHINGTON—AT LEAST A DOZEN GOLgays tied the knot in Washington, D.C., on the first day same-sex ceremonies were legally allowed, and many more sealed their vows earlier on the way.

The district on Tuesday became the ninth place in the United States where gay couples can legally get married, joining the states of Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Roberta and Delia Taylor picked up their license on Tuesday morning and in a historic Priest immediately married there outside the courthouse. The couple said they long ago exchanged rings and considered themselves married. Still, they were grinning.

"We've referred to each other as wives," Roberta Taylor said. "It's just a legal document, so if anything happens to one of us, we have rights."

Courthouse spokesperson Leah Gerowitz said 42 couples picked up licenses from the marriage bureau on Tuesday, and 32 returned them signed with that date, indicating they were wed. Couples have 18 days to return their license after getting married, however, so more same-sex couples may have been married on the first day.

In the meantime, three couples married at the office of the Human Rights Campaign, which does advocacy work on gay, lesbian and transgender issues.

The Rev. Darlene Garner married the five Cindy Holmes, Peggie Stanley and Kathy Galloway married and then carried their 14-month-old twins, daughters Anna the elder, and Angelina Young and Malinda Townsend hugged and smiled after being declared "partners in life this day and for always." AP

Boy saves family

HERMOSA, CALIFORNIA—A DRAMATIC call to police reveals a terrified 7-year-old boy begging emergency dispatchers to send police to his California home where three armed robbers were threatening his parents.

The boy sobbed over-gravy operators easily Tuesday after the gunmen broke into the home.

He said he was hiding in a locked bathroom with his younger sister while the gunmen threatened his mother and father at gunpoint.

On the recording, the boy begs the operator to send police quickly, "a lot of them ... And soldiers too."

When the gunmen broke into the bathroom and grabbed the boy, he screamed and told them he called police. The gunmen fled without stealing anything.

The Los Angeles County sheriff, Capt. Pat Maxwell, said the boy's brave actions helped avoid a tragedy.

The three men remain at large. AP

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that THERMA MARINE, INC. will offer sublease at Manila Corporate Center, San Manuel Corona Ave., Cebu City, is applying for registration with the BOARD OF INVESTMENTS (BOI) as New Operator of two (2) Power Barge Projects for the following sites on a Pioneer status:

Location	Capacity	Fuel
San Roque, Mun. Compostela Valley (7° 8' 11"N)	104 MW	Bunker C/Industrial Diesel Fuel Oil
Sta. Ana, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte (9° 0' 11")	104 MW	Bunker C/Industrial Diesel Fuel Oil

Any person with valid objections on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) DOMINGO C. BASINFORD
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

Experience Live Game with Toshiba REGZA LCD TV

Official Marketing Partner of the NBA

Toshiba Corporation and the National Basketball Association (NBA) announced a new marketing partnership in the Philippines. The alliance between the two leading brands in their respective fields, leveraging the appeal of the all-time popular products of Toshiba and the top notch games of the NBA, will definitely bring the excitement to fans throughout the NBA season.

Experience Live Game

With the most advance video and audio technologies, Toshiba REGZA LCD TV brings you the most spectacular game play in sharpest details and images. Watching NBA games or action has never been so real and captivating, just like watching the live games. The first edition is so much closer allowing you to see almost every breath-taking movement.

Toshiba REGZA LCD TV

Toshiba REGZA LCD TV has a full range of size up for your selection. The five series of LCD TV, starting from a petite-size friendly 19-inch to a gigantic 55-inch screens, provide a good combination of high-end Full HD and basic models. All models are powered by Meta Brain engine. Starting from the top-most of Meta Brain Premium and Meta Brain Pro engines featuring 14-bit and 10-bit video processing respectively are capable of handling high volume of data which produces ultra-high quality pictures.

The flagship LCD series, ZV600, is built for performance. On top of the pure technology of Meta Brain Premium, ZV600 series is equipped with other advance video and audio technologies such as Resolution+, ClearScan 200, Advanced Motion 200 and REGZA Mode. The high resolution and 200Hz smooth pictures zoom up the live games to your eyes while the high fidelity audio brings the stadium atmosphere to your room.

Key technologies

- Meta Brain Premium
The new Meta Brain Premium Series is a 14-bit video processing technology and Maja Square Algorithm which enhances gradation of 16,384 steps, delivers ultra smooth gradation and more true to life colors.
- Resolution+
Resolution+ analyses standard definition images to near high definition quality. It not only makes the image four times sharper to compare the two images and then removes the distortion. Resolution+ also analyses and refines the picture to improve the rendering of edges, textures and more.
- ClearScan 200
Image noise, which causes the blurring of a moving picture, is greatly linked to frame rate frequency. Toshiba ClearScan 200 technology increases the frame rate to 200Hz (via with reasoning technique technology to achieve the equivalent of a 200Hz effect while considerably reducing all the unnatural artifacts.
- REGZA Mode
Equipped with the new REGZA Mode, REGZA LCD TV delivers stronger base without compromising on the quality of the sound. Mode extends output sounds below 100Hz compared to 150Hz in ordinary LCD TVs, so that dynamic bass that improves overall sound quality, making music and movies much more enjoyable.

The WORLD

Editor Lamberto B. Quiazon

Suu Kyi barred from polls

RANGOON—THE MILITARY rulers of Burma (Myanmar) have barred prodemocracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi from running in upcoming elections and may force her own political party to expel her under a new election law unveiled on Wednesday.

The Political Parties Registration Law, published in official newspapers, prohibits anyone convicted by a court of law from joining a political party, making them ineligible to become a candidate.

It also instructs parties to expel members who are "not in conformity with the qualifications to be members of a party," a clause that could force Suu Kyi's expulsion. Parties that don't register automatically cease to exist, the law says.

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who has spent 14 of the past 20 years in detention, was convicted in August last year of violating the terms of her house arrest for briefly sheltering an American who swam uninvited to her lakeside residence. She was sentenced to a new term of house arrest that is to end this November.

PRODEMOCRACY leader Aung San Suu Kyi waves with supporters in this May 6, 2002, photo. AP

The sentence was seen as a way to keep Suu Kyi locked up during the election campaign. Last month, the Burmese found dismissed her latest appeal for freedom.

The new election law was immediately criticized by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party and by the United States and Britain.

The NLD dispute chair, Tin Oo, called the law unfair, politically motivated and designed to exclude politicians of the party which has already been battered by arrests and harassment.

"The fact that (party) registration will be allowed only after expulsion of a convicted member is too much. This is politically motivated (aimed) (at Suu Kyi)," he told reporters.

The junta enacted five election-related laws on Thursday two of which have now been made public. Three more are to be unveiled in coming days.

US Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said Suu Kyi should be released from house arrest so she could "play an active role in the political life of this country going forward."

"We've seen the first of five (laws). I think it would be easy to say that what we've seen so far is disappointing and regrettable," Campbell said during a visit to Malaysia.

The registration law says existing political parties have 60 days from Monday to register with an election committee whose members are to be appointed by the junta. The government currently recognizes 18 parties.

The law also bars members of religious orders and civil servants from joining political parties.

The date of the elections has not been announced, and Suu Kyi's party has said subscribes it will contest the balloting.

The government announced in 2008 that elections will take place sometime in 2010. The last elections in 1990 were won overwhelmingly by Suu Kyi's party, but the military refused to hand over power.

The NLD says the new constitution of 2008 is unfair and gives the military controlling say in government.

Suu Kyi's lawyer and a senior party member, Htwar Htwe, said she now may also face people who have lodged an appeal against a conviction, which he said "clearly solves" to Suu Kyi.

"It is very unfair that a party members owning a person room for his or her political convictions has to be expelled from the party. This clause amounts to interfering in party internal affairs," said Aung Thein, a lawyer who has defended activists in the country. He said the provision would exclude many prodemocracy individuals who have been imprisoned for their beliefs. AP

Animal activists target US resto

SANTA MONICA, California—Federal agents are investigating a high-end Santa Monica, California, sushi restaurant, following a video allegedly orchestrated by the prodemocracy of the Taiji-setting documentary "The Cove."

A United States attorney's spokesperson, Thom Mrozek, said on Tuesday, that Santa Monica's The Hump restaurant was under investigation for serving slices of the endangered fin whale, The New York Times reported.

Film director Louie Psihoyos said two animal activists used a tiny video camera to record a $600 "whale meat" or chef's chicken meal.

The activists pocketed a sample and sent it to an (Oregon). State University professor who confirmed it was whale.

The team visited the restaurant on seven times since October last year, once using as the bait to discuss preparations, and once with federal agents.

An attorney for The Hump declined to comment on the allegations. AP

INQUIRER mobile news

INQUIRER BREAKING NEWS: Two separate vehicular accidents, a few minutes apart, causes traffic jam along southbound lane of C-5 in Pasig City, says Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

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TIBETAN exiles chant anti-China slogans during Wednesday's march in New Delhi to commemorate the 51st anniversary of a failed uprising in their homeland against China's rule. AFP

Dalai Lama: China aims to annihilate Buddhism

DHARMSALA, INDIA—THE DALAI LAMA on Wednesday blasted Chinese authorities, accusing them of trying to "annihilate Buddhism" in Tibet as he commemorated a failed uprising against China's rule over the region.

The Tibetan spiritual leader's angry comments appeared to signal his frustration with leaders efforts to negotiate a compromise with China. However, he said he would not abandon talks.

Beijing has denounced the Dalai Lama and accused him of promoting independence for Tibet, which China says is part of its territory. The Dalai Lama says he only wants some form of autonomy for Tibet within China that would allow Tibetan culture, language and religion to thrive.

The dispute turned violent two years ago, when anti-government protests erupted in Tibet and China cracked down on the region.

The police presence in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa has been heavy ever since, but was stepped up even more in recent days with extra police guarding monasteries and demanding to see ID cards at checkpoints.

"Because of the March 14 (riot anniversary), police are patrolling in the streets every day, and they are conducting spot checks," said an ethnic Tibetan resident in the Lhasa Kim Hotel.

In his annual address from exile in India to mark the 51st anniversary of a failed Tibetan uprising against China, the Dalai Lama said Chinese authorities were conducting a campaign of "patriotic re-education" in monasteries in Tibet.

"They are pushing the monks and nuns in prison-like conditions, depriving them the opportunity to study and practice in peace," he said, accusing Chinese authorities of working to "deliberately annihilate Buddhism."

The Tibetan leader said that "whether the Chinese government acknowledges it or not, there is a serious problem in Tibet," but attempts to talk to the Chinese leadership about granting limited autonomy to the Tibetan people had gone nowhere.

"Judging by the attitude of the present Chinese leadership, there is little hope that a result will be achieved soon. Nevertheless, our stand to continue with the dialogue remains unchanged," he added in his speech, which was made in Tibetan. AP

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BUSINESS

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January exports surge 42.5% to $3.58B

Growth rate highest since April 1995

By Ramon F.W. Domingo and Abigail L. Hiz

EXPORT EARNINGS SURGED 42.5 PERCENT TO $3.58 billion in January as electronics shipments increased by more than half, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

Economic Planning Secretary Augusto B. Santos said the growth was the the highest since April 1995.

The January performance was a reversal from the 40.6-percent decline to $2.51 billion in the same month of 2009, which was the biggest setback during a 21-month slump due to the global fi...

JANUARY, B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱45.05 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 10, 2010

¥98.61 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 10, 2010

STOCK MARKET

Stocks sustain rally

LOCAL STOCKS SUSTAINED a three-day steady climb yesterday, led by utility stocks which started on the back of a power play and a booming power sales in the country.

The main index, Philippine Stock Exchange index, gained yesterday 42.28 points or 0.4 percent to close at 9,319.82.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

For more stocks reports on Page B3

The rally was led by telecommunication giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Aboitiz Power Corp., as well as Lopez-related First Gen Corp. and Energy Development Corp., which have become more attractive given an anticipated shortage of power-generating capacity in the country.

Total trades amounted to ₱5.34 billion, with 98 advancers against 82 decliners and 62 unchanged stocks. Gains posted by the industrial, holding-firm and mining-oil sectors offset the weakness in financial, property and services sub-counters.

Now that the index is revisiting the year's high of 3,100 at a very slow pace, it may not necessarily falter after hitting a double top, Eagle Equities president Joseph Yosaki said.

PLDT shares gained 0.2 percent to ₱2,580 and accounted for 16 percent of total trades, ahead of Friday's bullishness re-stake. The recent stake-sale by Hexindo Investor must be on the company's books as a shareholder to receive the dividend.

Other gainers were Universal Robina Corp., Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc. and Alliance Global Group Inc.

The local market was also supported by some foreign buying, which was reflected by the recent sharp appreciation of the peso. Investors also took heart from a relatively optimal trading in Wall Street.

Overnight, 30 stocks rose on the anniversary of the 2008 bear-market low for the Standard & Poor's 500 Index on expectations that the economy will continue to recover from the worst contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Boris C. Chanlee

El Niño damage to farm sector at ₱8B

DAMAGE TO CROPS and fisheries due to the El Niño dry spell has so far reached ₱8 billion, according to officials of the Department of Agriculture.

"The first figure is hovering around ₱8 billion," Agriculture Secretary Bernie Fondevilla told reporters yesterday. He said this was the actual damage as of March 2.

Fondevilla said that more than half of the damage hit rice and corn crops. There were minor damage to high-value crops such as fruits and vegetables while there was minimal damage to fisheries.

For rice crops alone, about 200,000 ha were damaged, Fondevilla said.

Asked whether the National Food Authority would import more rice to cover the production lost to the El Niño, Fondevilla said the government has not determined whether it would to go back to the market.

Fondevilla said the grains agency was always ready to act but was waiting for advice from the government's interagency committee on rice and corn.

Agriculture Undersecretary Joel Batallon said in an interview that the ₱8 billion was the verified crop damage to date. He said that the government was verifying all reports from regional field units and some have turned out to be "overstated."

"There are some areas claiming damage but they were apparently referring to a third crop, which should not have been planted at all in their area. We are recording our these claims to find out what is the real damage," Batallon said.

The Philippines is now at the tail-end of the El Niño weather phenomenon, although its effects will be felt until June, according to Nathaniel Cruz, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration

ELAINE Q. ...

3 local, foreign groups submit bids for Diwalwal mine projects

By Rico T. Gichoralde

ONLY ONE COMPANY PREVIOUSLY in the rebidding of the Lode V property in the gold-rich Mt. Diwalwal area in Compostela Valley according to the state-run Philippine Mining Development Corp. (PMDC).

There was more interest in the adjacent Hijauwong Bato property, which was bid out earlier, with five companies interested in the project.

PMDC bids and awards committee vice chair Jaime T. de Veyra said in a phone interview that Bankstone has offered to explore and develop the Lode V property for P310.82 million.

The minimum bid for the 1,296-hectare Lode V property was P25 million. De Veyra said his committee would evaluate Bankstone's proposal as per bidding rules.

"Before, in the 1980s, having only one bidder meant there was election of bidding. But since the 1990s, new rules allow us to evaluate even just one bid," De Veyra said.

PMDC declared a failure of bidding on the Lode V property in December 2009.

Joint-venture partner with DENR unit

There were two pre-qualified bidders: listed firm Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. and private company FF Cruz and Co. Inc.

However, "not one of the pre-qualified bidders submitted a bid," De Veyra said.

He said the prospective bidders who failed to submit proposals did not disclose why they did so. He disclosed to operators on why some bidders backed out.

Meanwhile, two companies submitted bids for the Hijauwong Bato parcel during Monday's session, PMDC said in a notice posted on its website.

Hijauwong Bato is a 1,519-hectare mineral property located within the 8,000 hectare Diwalwal mineral reservation.

PMDC said two bidders participated and submitted their respective bids—Canonal Nickel Corp. and China Nor-Fortune Metals Mining While 1 Group Co. Ltd.

A third pre-qualified bidder, FF Cruz, did not submit its bid, PMDC said.

PMDC added that its bid and awards committee would publish and inform the winning bidder after conducting its post-bid evaluation.

At stake in the two Diwalwal projects are joint operating agreements for the exploration, development and mining operations of the area.

The winning bidders will initially be given two years to explore the property.

The winning bidders will work as partners of PMDC, the government arm of Environment and Natural Resources' corporate arm.

PMDC is tasked to monitor and oversee the effective development of the government's mineral resources.

As a partner in the Mt. Diwalwal gold project, PMDC will get royalties on the production of gold, copper and other minerals.

Guimaras wind project seen costing $135M

By Amy R. Remo

TRANS-ASIA OIL AND ENERGY DEVELOPment Corp. plans to spend $135 million for its 54-MW wind farm in Guimaras.

"The final decision on whether or not to proceed with the project will be made by the second quarter of 2010 when the database on the feed-in tariffs and renewable portfolio standards (RPS) is made by the regulatory," Trans-Asia said in a regulatory filing.

The Pikamata unit disclosed that the wind power project in San Lorenzo, Guimaras, would be financed through 40-percent equity and 60-percent debt.

According to Trans-Asia, the Guimaras project was already at the advanced stage of development as the company has acquired 27 months of anemometer-based resource data, which confirmed the potential of the area for 54 MW of turbine capacity.

"The company is conducting its feasibility study, which would be completed upon the release by the National Renewable Energy Board of the feed-in tariff (FIT) and renewable portfolio standards (RPS)," it added.

The feed-in tariff system and renewable portfolio standards are among the mechanisms most awaited by investors as these would determine the price of electricity coming from renewable energy sources as well as the volume of electricity that distribution utilities would be required to buy from power generation companies.

These incentives could also help investors determine the viability of their projects.

Feed-in tariffs are regulated incentives or measures that typically pay premiums for the electricity generated from renewable energy sources. This concept has been used successfully in Europe to accelerate the development and use of renewable energy.

Ayala Land pursues diversification plan

By Dimitri L. Lozada

AYALA LAND INC. IS EXPECTED to move more aggressively into the lower margin segments of the residential property market as it diversifies its high-end focused strategy built over several decades.

In particular, the country's biggest real estate developer will devote more resources to its Alveo and Avida product lines, which focus on selling high-rise development to middle- and lower-income buyers, respectively.

In a press briefing, Ayala Land sales and marketing head Ron Mendoza said the Alveo and Avida lines might eventually grow to collectively account for around 40 percent of the firm's sales portfolio—to approximate the socioeconomic landscape of the country.

"Definitely, we will see Alveo and Avida playing a bigger role in Ayala Land going forward," Mendoza said.

Mendoza explained that, at present, both product offerings along with the high-end Ayala Land Premier line, each account for roughly a third of the firm's sales volume for residential units.

Alveo is expected to play a more significant role in contributing to Ayala Land's top and bottom lines since it started selling years ago with only a 14-percent share of the firm's sales. At present, Alveo contributes 30 percent of Ayala Land's earnings or about P6.03 billion.

Company officials declined to disclose the firm's gross margins for these two segments, although Ayala Land's average gross margins across its entire residential property business has traditionally stood between 30 and 35 percent—a premium to the 20 to 25 percent average margins charged by other developers.

Mendoza explained that both Alveo and Avida, although yielding less margin per unit sold, were expected to generate more volume for Ayala Land while preserving the firm's traditional strength and profit margin in its high-end property business.

Yesterday, Alveo launched the latest phase of its Two Serendra development called The Maverick—a high-rise residential tower in Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City—aimed at middle-income buyers.

Jose Isidro N. Camus Jr., Ayala Land president, told Alveo Land president Delfin Ranada said the project had attracted more than P700 million in sales from the firm's "priority buyers."

This added to the P14 billion in sales which the entire Two Serendra development had generated since the project was launched in 2004, he said.

Buyers who acquired Two Serendra units in 2004 have already experienced a 50-percent appreciation in their prices of their properties, which now cost at P170,000 a square meter, Ranada said.

January exports . . .

Front page ▸

annual rate.

MSO documents showed that, as nearer prices, the value of outbound cargoes in January was the biggest since the $3.63 billion recorded in November 2008 when exports gained momentum before the year-ending plunge.

Compared to exports in December 2009 when earnings reached $3.31 billion, January shipments grew 8 percent.

In January the value of electronics products sent out—which accounted for 58.8 percent of total outbound cargoes—grew 51.1 percent year-on-year to $2.03 billion.

Month-on-month, the country's top dollar earner rose 6.1 percent.

Demand for electronics shipments was driven by a 50-percent jump in semiconductor components and devices.

Barclays Capital, the investment banking unit of Barclays Bank, said in a report issued yesterday that the January export performance beat market expectations of a 30.2 percent increase as well as its own forecast of 36 percent.

"Looking ahead, the outlook for exports remains positive given the strong momentum in the global electronics cycle," Barclays Capital said.

"Rising exports together with strong remittance inflows should continue to support the peso," it added. The firm's 12-month forecast is for the peso-to-dollar to 44 to the dollar.

The NSO data showed that exports basis free on country's second top export—articles of apparel and clothing accessories—fell 7 percent year-on-year to $135.05 million.

El Niño damage . . .

Front page ▸

Deputy administrator for operations and services.

Estimated or unverified crop damage as of March 1 was at P1.2 billion. This was up 109 percent from the estimated P575.7 million damage as of Feb. 15.

The government earlier projected that crop damage due to the El Niño could be within the P6 billion to P20 billion range.

Agriculture output makes up about a fifth of gross domestic product (GDP).

The NSO said the country has enough rice stocks for local consumption. Government inventory is at 1.1 million tons, which will last 30 to 31 days if the grains agency were to serve all local demand, NSO Administrator Jesus Mascuñana said in an interview.

On top of this, there are stocks with the commercial and household sectors, Mascuñana said. Nine Th Odbonda

DISCLOSURES

PHILC Corporation Corp. on March 8 announced the resignation of Lucille V. Piccio and Leandro Viernes II. Piccio as board members.

* * *

ABCMO Funds Investments Corp. has announced the resignation of Eduardo S. Jr. as director of **AB Capital and Investment Corp.** and **Wood Investments Inc.** to ease of a recent Securities and Exchange Commission ruling that barred directors of investments engaged in securities dealership and broker-age from being elected as independent directors of publicly listed companies.

* * *

SM. CORP. of **Philippine National Bank** has approved the appointment of Lagunzad S. Rodrigo as president and CEO of the bank effective after the annual stockholders' meeting on May 31.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Chemrez Technologies Inc.** has elected Herman T. Sterba Jr. as the company's independent director and member of the audit and nomination committee effective March 9. Sterba succeeded Jesus A. Jacinto as managing director and Rodrino Jose C. Cabrilla as Compliance officer and corporate information officer.

* * *

MM BOND, Globeservices Corporation of the Philippines has announced the resignation of Jacinthe Vitero as member of the board of directors and as member of the following board committees: investment and budget committee and IT committee respectively.

* * *

TOMO-ASIA Oil and Energy Development Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on March 24 at 2:30 p.m. at the Rose Room of the Manila Midtown Avenue, Manila City. Stockholders of record as of Feb. 23 will be entitled to notice of, and to vote at, the said meeting.

* * *

A. SORIANO Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 21 at 10 a.m. at the Manila Peninsula Hotel in Makati City. The record date for the said meeting is March 18. *Compiled by Bridget Brendela Inquirer Research*

Net FDI inflow rose by 27% to $1.95B in '09

Bulk of foreign investments infused into BPO industry

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE COUNTRY REGISTERED a net direct foreign investment inflow of $1.95 billion in 2009, growing by 27 percent from $1.5 billion in 2008, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

This was attained despite the impact of the global economic turmoil on investor sentiment last year.

According to BSP data, a total of $2.30 billion in foreign investments were infused into the country in last year, while outflow reached only $349 million.

"FDIs had positive net inflow in the last two years despite the global crisis. This meant market confidence in the Philippines, which was less affected by the crisis compared to other countries, was strong," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez said the country's FDI performance in 2009 was within the BSP's target of between $1.5 billion and $2 billion.

He said the bulk of the foreign investments inflows last year were in the business process outsourcing industry.

Economic managers said the growth in FDI inflows helped the country escape a recession.

The economy contracted in terms of gross domestic product or GDP, grew by 0.9 percent, slower than the 3.8 percent in the previous year, but much better than the performance of other countries.

The FDI growth, Gutierrez said, was also be attributed to some foreign fund decrease to reinvest portion of their investments in their subsidiaries in the Philippines. Data showed that reinvestments in 2009 amounted to $896 million.

"Recent fears devoted to some of their earnings to the Philippines as they banked by the global economic rebound," the central bank official said. He added that many foreign investors saw emerging markets like the Philippines as favorable investment sites as the industrialized economies were badly hit by the global crisis.

Nonetheless, said FDI inflows were expected to further grow this year, with the global economy poised for recovery.

He said the Philippines and other emerging markets are expected to benefit from improved investor sentiment worldwide.

He echoed projections of the government's other economic managers that investments in the country's BPO sector would increase and that investments in the mining industry would be hard.

IT IS TRUE THAT OUR GOVERNMENT IS spending more than P1[illegible] billion of our tax [illegible] money for our first-ever fully automated elections.

By all counts, the not-so-cheap automation project is a clear "go." The Comelec assures every bit of technical support the project entails will be provided, especially by our intelligence. But on it, the Comelec is dead serious. The issue on this risky business.

Well, it is said that the automation will make "cheating" [OR, whichever fraud] at the precinct and city levels quite difficult. Some say it will be outright impossible. Our use of the word "cheating" is not to be taken literally.

As there do the unsuspecting candidates—just watched those locked up by the billions of pesos shown by the business sector into the political arena—are their cash to their advantage?

Time can tell but, surely, not the Bar exam. Lawyers continue to be the filing of the qualification case before the Comelec. It is just a matter of getting the Comelec to disqualify your wealthiest opponent, said wits, you win the election easily.

Those political animals can easily come up with new ways to cheat.

***

The issue came to light in media when a concerning lawyers took note of the "disqualification" trend. His name is Ferdinand Topacio, one of those who worked on the issuance of the arrest warrants for Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former Batangas Vice Governor Richard Recto. You know, big people!

The passion that Topacio does not shy away from is such legal fights as long as he has the goods on those big guys.

Topacio happens to be the legal counsel for incumbent Palawan Governor Joel Reyes, who is running for a reappointment seat in the same [illegible].

Reyes—some unnamed groups filed a disqualification case against Reyes. Not only that, the same groups also filed disqualification case against Baltazar Ong, Abraham Mitra, who is running for governor. In short, a lot [illegible].

Somebody must be out to control politics in the province. As everybody knows, this is the province that stands to get billions of pesos in royalty from the multibillion-dollar Malampaya natural gas find.

Questioned in the case was supposedly the residency of both Mitra and Reyes. There are those who believe that the governor and the congressman of the province for the past nine years. You mean, they are not from Palawan?

Rumors go around in the business scene about this "cost" of disqualification cases, if you know what I mean.

And so Topacio helped such satisfied dangling well to the expression of the Comelec, even devoting his services to its official. Pay-ers, as Topacio pointed out, there was a stacked increase in disqualification cases. Could the Comelec please look into it?

Most fear in a lawyer when came out in the open regarding the issue. He did not help be-lated the draft "unseemly." A lot of people thought the Comelec, like in the automation project, would take the issue seriously.

Risqué business

Conrado R. Bautista III

How did the Comelec react? Well, in a ludicrous defensive stance, the Comelec reported-ly told the Lawyer to prove it. There is a need for that—"candor."

Again, regarding corruption involving the disqualification issue in the Comelec, nobody has actually risk—not even the Gals at the Palace—into ever have the wherewithal to find out the truth. Only the Comelec can.

But as it stands, "proof is" is the only reason we get from the guardian of the sanctity of our ballots.

***

Hiding behind anonymity this time is a "concerned citizen" who apparently wants to destroy the chances of Jaime Antonio Crispo to become the next Chief Justice.

As everybody knows, media period Crispo against Senator Ernesto Corona to take the place of retiring Chief Justice Reynato Puno, with Corona supposedly the "hey"-o'clock-rate administration of Gloria.

The business community is following the drama unraveling, because most of the issue in the Supreme Court had case say or another something to do with business. You know...contracts, deals, and such.

The thing is, nobody can be sure that Crispo will be the choice of the next administration. It is nevertheless certain that he is not the choice of this anti-administration.

Now, in a letter to the Judicial and Bar Council, which makes the shortlist of nominees to judicial postings, that "concerned citizen" accused Crispo of using his government position during the time of former President Ferdinand Marcos to favor Crispo's wife.

The 6-more-said Crispo manipulated some government rules to qualify his wife, a businesswoman by birth, to become a naturalized Filipino.

Crispo's wife became a permanent resident of the Philippines way back in 1974—or two years after they were married. In 1978, the Philippine government recognized her as a Filipino citizen after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued her a Philippine passport.

That was almost 14 years before Crispo became the presidential legal adviser under the administration of Joseph Estrada.

No wonder, the issues have been rendered anonymity. The JBC could have also said, "prove it." Instead, the JBC gave Mr. X the courtesy of a concrete step by forwarding the anonymous letter to Crispo, who—then, what I heard...answered it convincingly point by point.

But on the issue of the sudden rash of disqualification cases in the Comelec, some lawyers raised his reputation...and perhaps even security—by coming out in the open.

I thought that the Comelec courtesy ("prove it") was a bit shifty.

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Aboitiz Power's ₱10-B fundraising plan OKd

By Amy R. Remo

ABOITIZ POWER CORP. SHAREholders said in board had approved its plan to raise as much as P10 billion this year through a retail bond issuance and a syndicated loan.

APC made the announcement in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

It said that about P5 billion will be raised through the bond offering and the remaining half would be from a loan.

The company will be availing funds for its planned power projects and acquisitions this year. APC plans to acquire the 246-megawatt (MW) Angat hydropower plant in Bulacan and the independent power producer administrator contract for the 2,200 MW Pagbilao natural gas facility in Batangas.

It is also keen on the IPPA contract for the United Leyte geothermal facilities, which would be auctioned off in August.

Also, APC is planning to put up a 100- to 300-MW coal-fired power plant in southern Mindanao, as it further diversifies its power generation business.

APC president Erramon Aboitiz earlier said the company was still in the negotiation phase and that it has yet to thresh out the details of the proposed project, including the site selection.

Although Aboitiz did not disclose the company's investment plans for the battle, he said about P800 million would be needed to put up a 100-MW power plant.

He further said that the company was planning to build more hydropower facilities, particularly in Mindanao.

"Over the next few years, we can build a couple of hundred megawatts in additional capacities [in Mindanao]," he added.

BSP may raise key rates by 25 bps

By Doris C. Dumlao

Insular Life new premiums up

INSULAR LIFE POSTED A 17 PERCENT IMprovement in new sales premiums to P2.19 billion by the end of 2009.

The increase in new business pushed total premiums last year to 6% 3 billion, up 6 percent from 2008.

Driving new sales are bank-based products and limited offer products, Insular Life, introduced by Insular Life in the first quarter of 2009. Peso-Payout is a single pay endowment plan that matures in five years with guaranteed annual payments, equal to as much as 7 percent of the sum insured, for five years.

"In 2009 the bulk of our new business still came from our traditional insurance plans. Moreover, we were able to take advantage of the high interest rates offered by fixed income instruments and packaged these in such a way as to give our insured attractive yields through the Peso-Income product," said Vicente Ayllon, Insular chief and CEO.

Its nationwide presence gave the company the opportunity to provide financial security in many areas as evidenced by the growth posted by its regional offices. Insular Life has more than 20 regional office buildings and about 90 branch offices in key cities in the country.

Adding impetus to the sales efforts is the commitment of reaching 150 years in 2013. "The morale of our agents and agency leaders is very high because everybody wants to deliver record performance in the company will mark its 100th founding anniversary on Nov. 25," he said.

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas may raise its key interest rates by 25 basis points by the fourth quarter of this year and, prior to that, hike its reserve requirement to avoid still a potential spike in inflation, a monetary veteran from leading bank said.

Newly appointed lending bank Treasury Ireland Arnaiz, who is also a former president of the Money Market Association of the Philippines, said strong liquidity growth might prompt the central bank to use the reserve requirement as a mopping up tool.

"I'm saying the excess liquidity is really becoming a problem and this is caused by the remittances from overseas Filipino worker remittances," Arnaiz said in a press briefing.

Reserve requirement now at 19 percent in the country, refers to the portion of deposits and other liabilities that banks are required to carve out of their loanable funds and place in certain low-yielding instruments with the central bank.

Arnaiz said the BSP might have room to jack up the reserve requirement to as high as 21 percent, although bankers preferred an outright increase in interest rates as this would boost the yield on fixed income instruments to be issued in the future.

Every one percentage point rise in the reserve requirements, Arnaiz estimated, would translate to a 10-15 basis point increase in local interest rates, which should not significantly jack up borrowing costs.

Arnaiz, however, said the BSP would keep a reserve requirement low as a fire up tion despite recent pronouncements suggesting the contrary.

As to when this remains appropriate hike would likely happen, Arnaiz said, "If you start seeing inflation creeping above 5 percent, it's a matter of concern because the negative differential between inflation and interest rate is beginning to widen."

Such a reserve hike in the reserve requirement, Arnaiz said, would siphon off about P35 billion to P40 billion in excess liquidity.

Excess liquidity exists presence as inflation increases slower than the annual money flowing via true goods.

Arnaiz noted that bank-linked up in the BSP's special deposit accounts—which later become a powerful monetary tool in recent years—stood at almost P700 billion as of end-January, up by P346 billion from a month ago. Those placed in short-term instruments with the BSP via its overnight borrowing facility amounted to P289 billion.

Air Philippines flies to Masbate March 19

Air Philippines is expanding its route network with the introduction of flights to MASBATE starting March 19, 2010, using the 50-seater Bombardier Q300 aircraft.

The new Manila-Masbate-Manila service comes four times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays): Air Philippines Flight 2P 021 departs Manila 6:00 AM, arriving Masbate at 7:15 AM; the return flight, 2P 022, leaves Masbate 7:35 AM, to land in Manila at 8:50 AM.

Air Philippines' route network offers convenient direct links to small domestic airports. Another recent addition to the network is the Busuanga-Puerto Princesa-Busuanga route opened last February 16, 2010.

For more information, call Air Philippines Reservations in Manila at (02) 8559000, visit www.airphils.com, or get in touch with Mr. Michael Demph Naga (Mobile-09175445999, address - Airport Road, Masbate City), Air Philippines' preferred sales agent in Masbate.

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BUSINESS

BIR taps sector 'champions' to raise tax take

Target industries include telecommunications, tourism

By Roneel W. Dasenge

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue is set to tap "industry champions" of emerging business sectors in an attempt to increase tax collection this year, according to Revenue Commissioner Joel L. Tan-Torres.

Tan-Torres said that a champion will help BIR units affected by undeclared and expired leaves on tax assessment, increase collections and strengthen enforcement in identified industries and sectors.

"There is a need to develop deep expertise on certain industries in order to get a full understanding of tax issues affecting them," the BIR chief said. "We still target industries where there is a substantial tax potential."

He said that initially, the agency has lined for the new program the industries of mining, shipping, telecommunications, banks and insurance, power, petroleum, utilities, tourism, franchising, tax incentives, business process outsourcing, show business and entertainment, cement as well as health maintenance organizations.

The designated industry champions have yet to be named, while additional industries for inclusion in the program will be identified "as needed," Tan-Torres said.

He explained that industry champions and specialists in the BIR will reach out to experts and leaders in the particular industries as well as coordinate with government regulatory officers "whose databanks the BIR can tap through cooperative agreements."

Also, the champions will monitor transactions reported in major newspapers or other media, link with industry associations, and take steps to develop knowledge databases.

"The industry champions shall also ensure that the taxpayer in the various sectors shall have a ready forum where they can discuss their concerns," Tan-Torres said.

The BIR is hard-pressed to find more ways to increase tax collection to meet a target revenue of P630 billion this year.

It implicitly "uncovered more leaves" than the 680 has adopted. Include Project StarNA Classic, which mentioned banana during the Christmas season, as well as the ongoing Project Run in Peace Investment compliance in lines on the issues will until the 5 percent tax on election campaign expenses.

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SMART GOLD

GIR seen hitting record in March

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE COUNTRY'S GROSS INTERNATIONAL reserves are expected to hit another record in March, due partly to the proceeds from the recent sale of $1.1 billion in Samurai bonds.

According to the latest data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the country's GIR reached a record $45.71 billion in February.

The GIR has been posting record highs over the past several months, supported by the continued rise in remittances from Filipinos based abroad, borrowings by the government and modest inflows of foreign investments.

GIR refer to the country's total amount of reserved foreign currencies and is managed by the central bank. It indicates the country's ability to purchase imported goods and services, settle debts denominated in foreign currencies and engage in other commercial transactions with the rest of the world.

Monetary officials said one area where the Philippines outperformed other countries is external liquidity as measured by the GIR because reserves kept rising even at the height of the global crisis last year.

According to the central bank, the latest GIR were enough to cover 9.28 month's worth of imports, up from 8.25 months registered in January. The latest GIR were also equivalent to 4.5 times the country's short-term debts.

The central bank said the increase in the GIR was also a result of its foreign exchange operations and income from its investments in instruments issued abroad.

RP firms earn $12.9M from ME buyers

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANUFACturers chalked up $12.8 million in sales from Middle Eastern buyers, with dried fruits and tropical fruit juices accounting for the majority of orders.

According to data from the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, Philippine participants in the recent Gulfood 2010 food expo generated inquiries not only from buyers from the Middle East, but also from Africa.

Visitors to the Feb. 21-24 food expo came from areas as diverse as the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, India, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Singapore, Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka.

Mecelda Orgelfinas, marketing director of Philippine participant Q-Phil Product International Trading Inc., revealed that her company received inquiries for processed fruits "in container loads."

PCG Trading Philippines Inc. export manager Genaro Alfonso also related that her company's assortment of dried fruits, including mango, jackfruit, coconut, papaya, pineapple, melon, and tamarind, also generated "positive responses" from buyers.

"Buyers now prefer the rich and natural taste of our dried fruits, compared to the sugary taste (of fruits) from other countries," she said.

Apart from the two companies, other local exporters and manufacturers that joined Gulfood 2010 included Pilmico Foods Corp., Fiberxcel Foods Corp. and PCG Trading Philippines Inc.

The Middle East imports 90 percent of its food supply and local food and beverage firms have long been benefiting from this demand.

Life Thrives Where You Are

LIFESTYLE Food

Mobile Alert: Text [illegible] | Website: [illegible] | E-mail: [illegible]
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** For select ice cream flavors only

PDI LIFESTYLE KITCHEN-TESTED RECIPE

Delicious meatless 'pakbet'

Use vegetarian 'chicharon' for Lent

D.I.Y. DO-IT-YOURSELF

By Norma O. Chikiamco
Contributor

PAKBET IS A NUTRITIOUS VEGETABLE stew but most recipes include bits of pork or chicken to make it more flavorful. Most author publish a recipe on the Fridays of Lent, when many Catholics abstain from eating meat.

Here's a recipe for pakbet that uses, instead of meat, a brand of vegetarian chicharon. If I hadn't seen the label on the package, I wouldn't have believed that it's really vegetarian chicharon—it tastes so much like the real thing!

Although I still use include boned sauce in my recipes, this one is so appropriate for the dish, that I'm making an exception. By using it lends pork substitute, you can have a delicious meatless pakbet any day of the year.

Lenten Pakbet

1 medium eggplant, sliced diagonally
Coarse salt
½ small kalabasa, peeled and cut into large cubes
1 eggplant, sliced diagonally
1 small bunch sitao, cut into 2-inch pcs
8-10 pcs okra, trimmed, head ends removed, sliced into halves diagonally
1 medium tomatoes, sliced lengthwise
1 medium onion, sliced
4-5 cloves garlic, crushed
¼c bagoong
1-2 c water
1 c Oishi Marty's Gourdin' Vegetarian Chicharon (one 90-gram pack), cut into bite-size pieces

Budget suggestion: to substitute meat in stewing water to ensure some of the fat/season.

In a medium casserole layer the ampalaya, kalabasa, eggplants, okra, okra, tomatoes, onions and garlic, one on top of the other (starting with the ampalaya). Sprinkle lightly with salt. Mix bagoong and water and pour over the vegetables.

Cover the casserole and simmer vegetables over medium heat for about 8 minutes. Add the chicharon on top and continue simmering for another 1-2 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Serve immediately with rice.

Pakbet with vegetarian chicharon

Tips

- Pakbet is best when eaten immediately after it's cooked. Hence, schedule your cooking time so that the pakbet is cooked just before you serve lunch or dinner.
- The amounts of the vegetables in the recipe are only a guide. You can use as much or as little of each vegetable as you like.
- Inside your kapamig (the pot) with the bite-size pieces of vegetarian chicharon, you can sprinkle crushed vegetarian chicharon over the vegetables just before cooking.

Where to find the perfect 'lasang Pinoy' burger

WHEN MY HUNGER MOMENTS come, they are usually dependent on whether my buds are in search of the real 'lasang Pinoy' burger, pottery or food hungry public that are rumored to perform.

Recently, driving around and looking for a place to have a quick bite, I found myself in White Plains starting on a simple enough food search/hunt/quest.

I gave it very, very serious thinking on the double pattie. You can just imagine how much I love tasm and how thick I want my burgers, simply to get the body taste I want.

I have decided it was best to take just a single patty. I remembered my diet, sometimes.

The burger served was huge! The fries (ala, Restaurant Game burger) by the pocketful, mounded type, a perfect round-alone party with little need for condiments.

There, I recalled how much I loved Tropical Hut hamburger in my youth. Closer to somewhere "it," has the Bulk Boys version—(hefty, tasty), such into a wonderful mouthful. Personally, any of the last bits.

According to the owner, Jessie M. Javellana, it was the "passion for burger" that drove him to open Cesar's first branch, a 20-sq m space in Sandhills, Bulo City in 2007.

Three years after, Cesar has found its way to Manila, by Javellana puts it, they are "capitalizing the rest of the room through the stomach," as they opened their first branch in Mega Mondo in Wilson Plaza, Quezon City in January; a second branch in SM Home Interchange, Las Piñas, in February; and soon, they will open their third branch in SM Bicutan, Las Piñas, this month.

But one Javellana's is the perfect dining-Pinoy burger, with the matching "fussy," that I will surely crave for over and over again.

Want a Cesar burger or craving for a franchise? Call Jess Javellana at 7980665 or 0915 (cell) 9500.

Gelato

What could be more perfect for the summer than this prize? Especially if the prize is made by chef Cyrille Courtet.

Chef Courtet, gold medalist for chocolate showpiece Dakta Culinaire International de Lucidres, February 2006), will be in town March 16 for a one-day gelato and patisserie event.

Gelato for techniques in gelato-, gelato-, sorbet-, yogurt- and sorbet-making. He will also demonstrate desserts, pastries and beverages.

It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Call Hanna or Tessie for inquiries and reservations at 551-3990, 551-2118, 5538314. Gem are limited.

Bocuse d'Or Asia finals

It is the time of year when we should all say a prayer, keep our fingers crossed and wish team JTB Philippines luck as they compete in the Bocuse d'Or Asia finals on March 17 in Shanghai, China.

The Bocuse d'Or is one of the world's most prestigious culinary competitions, founded in 1987 by renowned French chef Paul Bocuse. It brings together the best chefs from all over the world to Lyon, France, to celebrate French cuisine.

Filipino chef Jessi Himmel will be up against the best teams chefs from Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, India and Cambodia.

Only the top four of the Bocuse d'Or Asia finals will have a right to compete against the top 24 teams of the world in the Bocuse d'Or World Finals in Lyon, France, in January 2011.

GRAPHIC For Vicky Cruzin, Vanilla Mousse Cream, Ice Cake, Frozen Cold Glace

Lulu Dad's chef patron Ariel Manuel and apprentice Ti Abella have been busy to prepare 14 portions of their invited menu. Sauvignon Blanc with King Cole, accompanied by Foie Gras on Cream and Asparagus and Cream Caramel. This dish will be presented on a specially designed plastic made by artist Allan Agtan. Hand made for this team is French chef Cyrille Sourcet of Restaurant Cirrus, joined by chefs Gilbert Felix of Antonia Manchester, Florido Antonio of Bacsor Canteen, My Thai and J. Gamboa of Orlando and Millenium Restaurants.

Since 2007, the JTB Philippines Culinary Team has had great success at culinary competitions in Hong Kong and Singapore winning top prizes and numerous medals and trophies for the Philippines. JTB is committed to the training and development of the Filipino professional chef.

My summer days schedules, what's in Dads Closet for Kids, My Wife My Closet, Cooking for Teens and Beginners, to mention a few, are now out. For reservations and copy of the schedules, call 9285256, 9275008, 0479744, cook 2372 ext.

JTB Place

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aghoy

TINY KITCHEN 2010

Summer cooking classes for kids

NOW ON ITS 12TH YEAR, Vicky Veloso-Barrera's popular cooking school for children, Tiny Kitchen, opens its doors to young kitchen enthusiasts age four to 19. With an initial bunch of nine students, nearly 2,000 have since learned the joys of cooking at school.

"Tiny Kitchen is the only completely hands-on cooking school exclusively for kids," says Teacher Vicky. "Since I taught myself to cook using a Betty Crocker cookbook at the age of seven and spent a good portion of my childhood in the kitchen, I knew what kids like to cook."

The school is at 31-A Isaac Tolentino, Barangay Laging Handa, Quezon City. The first batch will run from the week beginning April 5 to the week beginning May 3. Second batch is from the week beginning May 10 to the week beginning June 7.

There are courses for children age 4-6 (Tiny Kitchen 1), 7-12 (Tiny Kitchen 2) and teens 13-19 (Teens).

All kids begin with Intro Course consisting of five sessions. Intro runs for scheduled once a week, two or more times a week or every day, depending on the child's schedule.

After Basic they can go on to Advanced Class. This is another five-session course. Kids who have completed both Basic and Advanced have many choices of additional courses, including the very popular Kids Around the World series where the latter is termed the World Part 6 and 7.

There are also other courses such as Fiesta Favorites, Americana Cuisine, Flavors of Asia, Taste of Europe, Cake Decorating, Just Desserts Part 1 and 2, Budding Bartenders, Chocolate, Dessert Workshop and more.

Aside from Around the World Part 6 and 7, new courses for 2010 include Like Real Yummy, for kids who need to watch their weight; Pre-school Partners, and there are also one-day baking and cooking workshops for those who want to try it out first.

Tuition includes ingredients and recipes. Classes are Monday-Saturday except Friday. The morning session is 9-11 a.m. and the afternoon, 2-4 p.m. For information, call Vicky at 4342279, 09173393940, e-mail tiny_kitchen@hotmail.com, or visit www.tinykitchen.com.ph.

THE 411 ON WINE AND FOOD

What to Look For when Buying a Good Shiraz

By: Lia S. Bellardo

When we talk about finding a good shiraz, Australia will always be the country of choice. Here are some tips for buying a good shiraz from Australia.

a. Pedigree

Take the history of the winery into account. This holds more weight than going into the history of the winemaker. The awards and reviews a winery holds will speak highly of the type of wine it delivers. The sourcing of grapes is also very important and the pedigree of the winery will also determine their ability to source and/or grow grapes.

b. Region

Shiraz grapes tend to thrive more in warmer climates. The Barossa region in Australia for instance tends to have very hot days and very cool nights. The shiraz wines from the Barossa Valley region tend to be heavier compared to the other wine producing regions in Australia. By heavier it means that the wine is fuller bodied with distinct flavors of black pepper, as opposed to a Shiraz wine coming from a more temperate maritime region such as Margaret River. The shiraz wines from Margaret river will have a more refined, more consistent flavor. Barossa Valley wines or shiraz wines from warmer climates will have a very distinct up front flavor on the initial taste, likened to an explosion of flavors. Whereas, the maritime region counterpart will yield a more subtle and more balanced wine in terms of flavors. So if black pepper and dark fruits would be the top note of the Barossa Valley, Margaret River shiraz wines will give you white pepper and fruitier flavors likened to red cherries. The choice depends on which flavors you prefer.

c. Expert ratings

Let someone else do the work for you. Most wines will have ratings by wine connoisseurs such as Robert Parker and James Halliday. Magazines such as Wine Spectator, Wine Enthusiast, Wine and Spirit Magazine regularly release reviews and ratings. Wines also receive international awards and if you base your purchase on these reviews and ratings you will not go wrong. Reputable wine stores will have these awards and reviews available to you. Go to stores that employ knowledgeable staff who can recommend good wines. Remember that price is not always an indication of good wine.

d. Try it and make a list of the wines you like

At the end of the day, you are consuming the wine so try the wines and make a list of those you like so that you can purchase them again. Since wine is so subjective, no one really has the right to tell you what you should like and what you shouldn't like.

TOP PICK SHIRAZ WINES

D'Arenberg and Barossa Valley Estate wines are sold exclusively at Wine Depot stores.

Salted cod from Macau

Szechuan crab

Cantara offers Szechuan Crab, Crab Martinez, Typhoon Stellar Crab, Singaporean Black Pepper Crab, Thai spicy crab with shrimps, seafood roll chabalito dumplings, Baked New Zealand Mussels, Pasta Diane in with black truffle, Basquez Garlic Prawns, golden fried crocodile, Carbonara Alla Pescatore Pad Thai, Nasi Lemak, Nasi Goreng Kampung, Mee Goreng Mamak, Kuay Teow Goreng Pattaya, Mee Siam, Mee Rebus, Mee Soto, Roti Prata, Roti Tissue, Roti Bom, Roti Pisang, Roti Kaya, Roti Sardine, Roti Planta, Roti Bawang, Roti Kosong, Roti Kosong Special, Roti Kosong Telur, Roti Kosong Sardine, Roti Kosong Pisang, Roti Kosong Kaya, Roti Kosong Bawang

ROMANTIC: Royal Albert features, English rose designs

Lucky winner will be chosen. Also, hotel stylist creates four wedding themes

TRADITIONAL white chairs a green twist with Filipiniana touches of floral, cochin-shaped napkin rings, old glass chargers and white orchids.

CHARMING. Murray cheers for two cookies and to red chopsticks and red napkins tied with bamboo heads.

CONTEMPORARY setting depicts strong shapes and blue seen on modern majolica such as glass and metal.

Mandarin giving away P500,000 wedding reception

By Margie C. Enriquez
Contributor

A FIRST IN LOCAL WEDDING HISTORY! A free wedding reception worth half a million pesos will be given by the Mandarin Oriental Hotel!

The twelve—and enhanced wedding packages awarded on March 20 and 22—are among the come-ons for deliberating couples.

Cecilia Asedillo-Cruz, director of conferences and banquets, says that in the past few years, undependent venues were favored by the wedding market. But the hotel's owner would still have to hire various suppliers for the reception. She says the hotel's advantage is that it offers everything, including styling.

The biggest come-on is the chance to win a P500,000 reception for 200 guests. Couples who plan to hold their weddings between May 1 and Dec. 31, 2012, are eligible for the raffle. The deadline is April 15.

Responding to the trend in theme weddings, Mandarin offers four customized themes.

White et al

The traditional white is still most popular, among Filipinxeno elements. The centerpiece consists of silver swine, candelabras and old frames for tables' names, photographs, and arranged with white roses, lilacs, orchids and snapdragons. It also uses cellado menus, place mats and napkins suggestive of cenacula pastillas wrappers.

The Emerald wedding is a burst of nature colors—pink, orange and fuchsia, which are popular motifs. The centerpiece is a clear vellum glass on which simple capiz seashells, and bright fans, printed on which is the guest's name, they take the place of name cards. Tied to red chopsticks are fortune cookies, and napkins are on rings of wire and glass beads.

The modern wedding theme has clean lines. The setting uses no tablecloth, and other accessories—mat highlighting the geometry of the tableware which, in this theme space, seems to float on the table.

Black napkins are a contrast to the white plates. Instead of floral vases, the flowers are arranged in simple square mirror filled with shells, cabbage roses, cymbidium and rose carnaxes example and lilac.

The designer setting showcases the Monique Lhuillier Collection for Royal Doulton. The table setting is understated, elegant, emphasizing the plate designs inspired by the designer's bridal gowns.

The pale d'oeuvre collection is inspired by Lhuillier's soft tulle gowns. Trimmed white dots, tiny bows and gray borders adorn the delicate bone china.

For a contemporary look, the Stonus Petite line has the embossed Lhuillier dot.

The Floral Dustbin collection is presented exclusively for the hotel in partnership with Rustan's.

For the connoisseur, Old Country Rose highlights the Royal Albert collection, also from Rustan's, demanded by rich Australians.

Three themes were styled by Bobbi Quintos, executive by Mandarin Flower Shop. The florist selling is an add-on. They are great for HD and presidential rates and start at P10,000+ for a table of 10.

The Platinum Package, which feels P600,000 to P650,888, come with a 88 Deluxe room, inclusive of round-trip airfare for the couple and a two-night stay at the Fairmont.

THE CANDY tables with organza envelopes and lime tiles center dupes in the Oriental theme, with natural colors of red, orange and lemon.

"ART IS WHEN THE HEART GUIDES THE HAND."

-VICTORIO EDADES

Once again, Rockwell breaks away from local design conventions with Edades Tower and Garden Villas. Edades creates the co-existence of a tower containing Garden Z Lofts jutting out of the Manila landscape, and chic garden villas in a playful cluster of bi-level units. There's a piazza to house select retail establishments, apart from the exclusive tunnel access where you can enjoy your dining and shopping experience at the Power Plant Mall.

These are just some of Edades' life-enriching features, reflective of National Artist Edades' revolutionary aesthetic. It's the latest piece in the Rockwell masterplan where art inspires and steers the creation of form that is always delightful and never ordinary.

EDADES
TOWER AND GARDEN VILLAS

Visit our model unit at the Power Plant Mall
or call 755-0366.

ROCKWELL

ROCKWELL AND LOPEZ MASTERPIECES:
WEAVING PHILIPPINE ARTISTRY TOGETHER

2010 marks Rockwell Land's big push for its latest residential project, Edades Tower and Garden Villas, inspired by the father of Philippine modern art, Victorio Edades. Edades promises to be a structural masterpiece; defying real estate conventions with bi-level loft units transforming into garden villas, and Z lofts spilling out into garden decks.

It was just fitting then for Rockwell to host the **10th Anniversary celebration of the Lopez Museum**, home to Hidalgos, Lunas, and Amorsolos, which are Rockwell namesakes for its iconic residential towers.

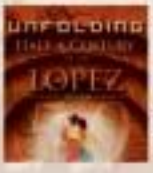
the museum's irreplaceable examples of Philippine heritage and document materials that deeply and critically reflect the country's collective past. In the end, a nation's inability to appreciate its past will hinder all efforts to reach its destination."

This year, the Lopez Museum is committed to move the institution forward by pursuing an interdisciplinary approach, starting with the launching of the coffee table book, **Unfolding Half a Century: The Lopez Memorial Museum**, last February 18th at the Rockwell Tent. Departing from stodgy character usually associated with museum events, the Lopez Museum capped the celebration with a multi-sensory exhibition: Threads at Rockwell.

Benjamin Lopez and Vendon Padilla

Margo Vargas, Yael Buencamino and Chito Ramirez

The Lopez Museum's current trove of artwork started as the late Lopez Group founder Eugenio H. Lopez Sr.'s personal collection. It has since grown to be one of Asia's finest, with its mix of valuable 19th century Lunas and Hidalgos, and modern masterpieces. The library also currently counts over 19,000 Filipiniana titles by 12,000 authors, rare books, maps, manuscripts and literary works.



Lopez Group chairman Oscar M. Lopez puts it, "By launching the museum and opening it to the public, my father headed to a purpose larger than the display of an outstanding collection. We continue efforts to safeguard

The event featured contemporary artists Lee Aboya, Myra Beltran, Jef Carvey, Kiri Dalena, Ann Tiukinhoy Panintoan, Claro Ramirez, Jean Marie Sypaco and Ann Wizer. Each gave his or her own interpretation of characters found in iconic works from the museum collection, giving the contemporary viewer visually delightful stimuli. Highlights of these performances and installation pieces were exhibited at the Rockwell Power Plant Mall North Court last February 19 to 25, 2010.

ENTERTAINMENT

Edited by Rosario G. Velarde

One-on-one with VP candidates

GMA NETWORK features one-on-one interviews with the vice presidential candidates in "Race No Ka?... The Vice Presidential Interview" to be broadcast on its radio stations dzBB, Barangay GLINF and all NUMA AM and FM stations nationwide. The interviews, to be conducted by broadcast journalist Mike Enriquez, are weekdays until March 26 at 6 a.m. On board today is Bongbong Marcos; candidate Perlas is Saturday.

Sweet Simon: I miss Paula

SIMON COWELL MAY BE WITTOL: one cool controversial for his acerbic, brutally frank remarks as a judge on "American Idol," but it's his pronouncements that underscore around the world's newest.

Cowell, who now has own music label and produces other reality TV shows, is on his last season as "Idol" judge. He's launching the US version of "X Factor" in 2011.

In a conference call with the entertainment press from across the United States, Cowell was asked about the chances of a woman winning "Idol" this year. Paula Abdul, Ellen DeGeneres and Sir Richard Branson.

Is it important to you that a woman should win "American Idol" this year?

It depends, what that's like. We've had a few years now of guys winning the show and I would say there is definitely a better chance of a girl winning it this year, certainly than last year.

What would be the right type?

(CONT'D ON A2)

One final rehearsal for the Café Carlyle gig

NEW YORK CITY—QUESTION: How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Answer: Practice, practice, practice. In my case, three days, you can explore Carnegie Hall with Cole Corbyn.

We have been busy rehearsing for my concert gig ("The Journey ... So Far") for over a week, heading in the studio daily to hammer out material, pitches, new musical arrangements and reevaluate old... or since to create an outstanding performance. I can't wait to get the show going! We're all been having such a great time!

What to wear

Since the Carlyle is a small venue, it has been enough to suggest that I shop for something simple and contemporary to wear. Taking that to heart, I armed myself with the most important companion for a shopping trip: it took: trouble and style-savvy gay mate Uly Ilac, one of the agents, Arch Pulli.

Soft-set up a visit to designer at Louisiana's. At the personal shopping department, we were taken care of by a wonderful lady named **Liz Miller** and her associate Erin Parker. Two pairs of clothes were set up for me to take a look at, by

(CONT'D ON A2)

Stop losing your hair. Regain your confidence!

For most women losing hair is like losing vibrancy, self-confidence and self-esteem. And this could lead to depression, anxiety and feelings of inferiority. Stop losing your hair. If there are women like Interior Designer Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Designer Eva Abesamis who fought and triumphed against hairloss — you can, too. Discover their secret.

Excessive stress, genes or too much extreme styling methods could cause women's hairloss. To stop falling and thinning, one needs the right treatments. In the Philippines, there's only one hairloss center where advanced treatments and highly trained technologists are found: **Svenson**.

Tessa fought thinning hair as soon as she experienced its early signs. "Thinning hair makes a woman look older. I didn't want that to happen to me. When I noticed lots of hair on my pillow and my hair started to thin out, I immediately bought 'thickening' shampoos that I was disappointed. They didn't stop my problem. Good thing I discovered Svenson. After a course of treatments, my hair regained its original volume. It's even softer, more lustrous. I could style it any way I want it!"

Eva, on the other hand, wanted her results for her hair. "I didn't want to use other products. I just wanted the best. When a friend recommended Svenson, I decided to give it a try. I had no more falling hair. It's back to its lush, shiny, stunning look. I know I made the right decision. Thanks to Svenson!"

Stop falling and thinning hair. Call Svenson at 891-BAHR (4247)/ 234-8850 (Cebu) today for a FREE consultation. You can be assured that all consultations are carried out in private.

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OVERHEARD

KATHRYN Bernardo

QUOTES FROM Sunday night's Do-over:

■ "I'd just like to dedicate this to the women and men in the military who risk their lives every day to keep us free and safe in Afghanistan and around the world." —Kathryn Bernardo, Best Direction

SANDRA Bullock

■ "I would like to thank ... the women that take care of the children and the children who don't have mothers where they come from. Those moms and parents were all thanked." —Sandra Bullock, Best Actress

MONIQUE

■ "When we did only women, if you really look at it, we took things that are on there in the world every day, we just made them big, girlie, flirtier." —Monique Lotven, after winning the award for Visual Effects

■ "To my amazing husband, Mikey ... thank you for showing me that sometimes you have to forget doing

STEVE Harris

what's popular in order to do what's right. And baby you did. Mikey, you're right." —Mr Wagon, Best Supporting Actress

■ "The biggest change this year, the Best Picture category has doubled. When that was announced, all of us in Hollywood thought the same thing: What's the worst that can happen? ... I'm not ashamed. Steve Martin

OUTFITTED AT THE OSCARS

Miley Cyrus (right) wears a bustier-style strapless gold number by Jenny Packham. Not surprisingly, Grimes (left) wears a midnight blue gown by Monique Lhuillier with a sculpted bodice and draped trompe-l'oeil skirt.

Sweet Simon: I miss Paula

Somebody who represents what is going on in the music biz, I'd love to find a Dolby fourth sensitivity solution, rather than just a content solution.

How do you balance what's good for the TV show with what's good for the music industry?

We put a variety of people through criteria on (the basis of) talent and interest in dance people. If you just pick everybody because they look the way you think they should look, it happened a few years ago. I remember every blond girl in the competition looked identical. I think it's important that you can recognize talent, personalities, so I think it's good that we have a mixed bag this year.

There are stories about you and Ellen DeGeneres not getting along.

I wouldn't say that... It was a difficult position for her because she wanted Sarah on (the Hollywood) Week. There was one story. I read that I tossed up an hour late or something and that she wanted it like. The truth was, I turned up 15 or 20 minutes late because I did a press conference earlier in the day and they did start filming, but that wasn't a particular problem. There was no fallout. I was trying to guide her through the week and that was about it.

Do you miss Paula?

Paula's my friend. I mean, amazingly, even though we used to argue a lot, she was wonderful. I just got very close to over the years. We'd hang out together after the show like all ways tends to laugh. I do miss her.

How much music experience should a judge have?

It's interesting that when we first started we had a mixed producer, an artist and an A&R man, so you've covered pretty much everything you need to do. I would say somebody who's had managerial experience is always very helpful, but as simple as versus... you generally need to know what you're talking about.

Are there comments directed at Ellen?

I'll tell you why I think Ellen was a good choice. She actually is very responsible for people performing on her own show. And she loves music and she's been an artist, so no, it wasn't meant to diss her credentials.

One final rehearsal ...

From page D1

designers **Rudolph Minkin**, **Valentino**, **Armani**, **Monique Lhuillier**, and **Roberto Cavalli** (pictured). Trust: I knew I couldn't pick all the clothes, so I needed to narrow it down to two or three pieces. I skipped down to Rudolph's showroom.

Paul was the Rudolph—a pair-and-a-jewel number with large crystals on the neckline, shoulder cut-outs, a bra. That was one of my first choices. Next was Andrew Gn—in the images it looked just okay, but once I put it on, it was absolutely beautiful. Turquoise, fluted and sexy with beautiful colored beading. I also considered a black number as both an incumbent piece and an option for the colored, but I was told I'd have to come back for that.

I returned a few days later. The dressmaker was waiting for me—it fit like a glove. Finally, I bought a pair of Jimmy Choos that would look fabulous with either choice.

Another Broadway show

The show that I have become most excited about after seeing it is **Stephen Sondheim**'s "A Little Night Music." I had seen it in London years ago, but couldn't wrap my head around the piece. Watching this new production (directed by **Trevor Nunn**), I knew why I had trouble the first time: It's Bergman's lived enough of life to appreciate all that this show had to say.

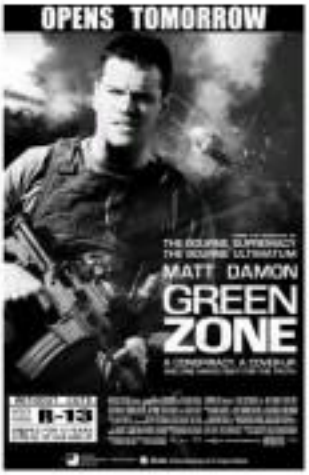
Based on **Ingmar Bergman**'s film, "Smiles of a Summer Night," the music is at once adult in theme and subject (although it's set in way-of-the-century Sweden). There are trysts, bittersweet, unrequited (and then fulfilled) love ... and the music? The show is one big waltz.

Catherine Zeta-Jones and **Angela Lansbury** star in the gorgeous revival. (Both were Tonia!) me: power less won the best critics smiling endorsed.) Although the both of them turned in wonderful performances (Ms. Lansbury is delectable, a comedic class) in the roles known originally to Broadway as sung, a line, it looks, it is like supposed to act that really makes that work anything. My favorite story **Aurora Lauer** and **Erin Davie** (as Count Carl Magnus Malcolm and Countess Charlotte Malcolm) for stealing every single scene!

Atlantic Productions will stage this in October with **Bonnie Bedelia** as Desiree Armfeldt. It's one of the most perfect musicals ever created! (Send in the Clowns' it becomes down).

It's time for me to get some sleep now ... I have a final rehearsal at Cafe Carlyle ... my last show at opening the show before rehearsal is a opening audience. Honestly.

Two racks of clothes were set up for me to fit at Bergdorf & Goodman's



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4 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
5 THE RED SHOES
6 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY

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3 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
4 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
5 THE RED SHOES

CITY STA. MESA | VISTA MALL | MARIKINA

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3 COP OUT
4 THEM THAT WERE WITH LOVE
5 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
6 THE RED SHOES

VALENZUELA | CITY SUGAR | CITY SOUTH

1 COP OUT
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
4 THE RED SHOES

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CITY TARLAC | CITY LIPA | CITY LUCENA

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
4 COP OUT
5 THE RED SHOES

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1 VALENTINE'S DAY
2 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
3 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
4 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
5 COP OUT
6 THE RED SHOES

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4 THE RED SHOES

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7 UP IN THE AIR
8 RED SHOES
9 MEN AND DAM
10 Indefinite: PARIS/AUT

MANILA | METRO EAST

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
3 THE ROAD
4 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
5 COP OUT
6 THE FOURTH KIND
7 UP IN THE AIR
1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 COP OUT
4 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
5 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
6 RED SHOES
7 THE ROAD
8 PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS

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3 IT'S COMPLICATED
4 ARMORED
5 DARKNESS

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1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 COP OUT
4 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
4 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
5 DARKNESS
6 CAGE 19

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1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
4 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
4 COP OUT

TACLOBAN | DUMAGUETE

1 VALENTINE'S DAY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 THE WOLFMAN
1 VALENTINE'S DAY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 THE WOLFMAN

BACOLOD | ILOILO

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 THE WOLFMAN
3 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
4 COP OUT
5 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
6 DEAR JOHN
1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES
4 WHITE TUS
5 CAGE 19
6 EDGE OF DARKNESS

DENSAN

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 PERCY JACKSON and the OLYMPIANS
3 IT'S COMPLICATED
4 EDGE OF DARKNESS

ILOCOS NORTE

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2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 THE WOLFMAN

A moment captured on love leaves almost unlimited memorability is threatened on day by its own with their memories. Quickly forgotten.

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THE DATE
MARCH 12

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BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and go types at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

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4	6	5	8	9	2	1	3	7
3	2	9	6	7	1	4	8	5
2	3	8	9	1	7	5	4	6
9	5	4	2	6	8	7	1	3
1	7	6	4	3	5	2	9	8
6	4	3	1	5	9	8	7	1
5	1	7	3	8	6	6	2	9
8	9	2	7	2	4	3	5	4

Difficulty Level ★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Anatomy of a show biz *apology*

By Rowena G. Velarde

KRIS AQUINO APOLOGIZED ON MONDAY to Ruffa Gutierrez, on the behest of Ruffa's mother, manager Annabelle Rama, about... come to think of it, what was that about?

As viewers of "The Buzz"—which the two girls co-host with Boy Abunda—all know, Kris has not mean everybody in mid-sentence on that program, not just Ruffa and Bing but also the guests!

Did Kris do worse than usual last Sunday making, needlessly, by her own admission, or she her daughter to walk out? Whatever the answer to this, Kris' apology was a wise move, and spontaneous though it seemed as the whole country watched her deliver it, hindsight suggests, a very clever hand, too, that covered all the bases. In one fell swoop—and in under five minutes—she 1) apologized to Ruffa for 2) defended herself and 3) suggested that Annabelle Rama had not been the mother she was to her own girls, 4) took up the mantle for Dingdong Dantes, who's backing up Raymond Aquino for president, 5) quieted Raymond's detractors on politics and 6) freedom of choice, 7) reminded televiewers of President Cory (the Filipino heart of her life, then and now) 8) promoted TFC and how 9) relevant it is.

Not a few cheered when the declared, self-lovely is revealed seems, that she'd 10) push her luggy and bring her boys to live anywhere there's TFC (The Filipino Channel), should her brother become president and she proved to be a "source of news for him and his presidency." Was that possibility ever in the picture? Here's how it went down:

"I had dinner until. Any tonight after his TFC shoot. He told me of way he speak to me quiet Sunday dawn? And he asked why eye sunkeny when he's not even part of Buzz."

"I would like to 1) extend a greeting to Ruffa. I missed the tape and although I still feel 2) I gave my comment with effective maybe it made her feel even worse because she's even viewing in a new direction.

"We had what I believed was 3) a good working relationship in the almost one years we were together on 'The Buzz.'

"I can also understand that 3) Ruffa's more children by now and my family 4) I maybe instead of consistent and our vocal production of admiration for Dingdong and his selfless contribution to help Noy's presidential bid.

"It is with Ruffa that I enjoyed a healthy working relationship with 5) and I only have good words to say about her.

"To Ruffa, 5) I sincerely apologize for causing you hurt. My brother Pinkee would like also making that possible (Presidential No. 204 and 207, both signed in March 1986 and Republic Act No. 6969, signed in April 1990, declaring March 8 as National Women's Day).

"We celebrate women who triumphed despite odds and found in them all ways to help their inspiration. And's why I want Ruffa to have a great career ahead of her—because she's a woman, raising two beautiful daughters. And I champion all women who triumph despite the odds—just like my own Mom.

"Nay told me 5) in my doctor, we'll have our share of the wit supporters and bar-bad stuff to, and if you can't take the heat, than politics isn't for you.

"As a woman, 5) I salute Ruffa's Mom and the Lolo of Lorin and Venice, I respect you. The thankfully, and on behalf of our family. 5) I

KRIS Aquino: "I understand that Ruffa's mom defines Mayroop and my family..."

Kris Aquino's message to Ruffa covered all the bases in under 5 minutes

apologize for the distress we caused years. 23 (Hindi pa ako nagsalang, hope ako nagpa. patawarin ng ganon).

"For a last note, 5) I promised Noy when I'm done now, and I'm the cause of stress for him and his presidency, I'll gladly take up two boys to live 6) anywhere there is TFC so that I can continue to watch her with our overseas Filipino brothers and sisters. 9) Of course they said, dinner date you, hindi siksaryo ko.

"I love my family and I'm so grateful to have such a supportive and protective brother and sisters, who have learned to love me for all that I am. Thank you for your time and may God bless all of us with a peaceful week ahead."

Manila Doctors Hospital bags twin Anvil victories

The Foundation actively supports the hospital's operations and provides funds for a wide array of social services, including subsidies for indigent patients, charity outreach programs and Health Maintenance Organization of Accredited Communities and Hospitals.

The hospital was recently accredited as ISO 9001:2000 Certified and is a Philippine Accreditation Association Hospital.

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"SACCHARING TEAR-JERKING SCHMALTZ that left PILES of KLEENEX at the screening."

Who's afraid of a gay-movie glut?

Pinoy indies may be canceling out one another in cinemas

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WHO'S SCARED OF CAN PEARL?

During the first Indie Film Summit sponsored by the Film Development Council of the Philippines and the Cultural Center of the Philippines last year, the participants raised a common concern: There is a danger that, with the glut of independent producers, their films would cancel each other out, should they open in local theaters simultaneously.

Four alternative local movies open this week: Rahmon Jones's "Rabid Boys," Raul Arnibal's "The Red Shoes: A Love Story," Jonson Bautista "Portalan" and Mark Hamski Hacohen's "Beat & Burn."

Because Raul doesn't back the premiere of his film to give way to the Quezon Love Film Fest which ran the week of Feb. 27. Unfortunately, "Portalan" is now being pitted against another gay drama "Bata, Bata."

Arnibal, whose film debuted at the Quezon Love Fest last month, insisted one, "It's important for us, gay filmmakers, to voice out our opinions, beliefs, sentiments, even our desires."

He noted that his film tackled discrimination. "It's getting worse ... in schools and [society] in general. My film is about the hardships and consequences of coming out."

About love

But mainly, Arnibal said, his film is about "love." He is presenting nonstereotypical gay characters. "I wanted to avoid clichés. There's no trans, prostitutes. No sassy flamboyant persons types."

He noted that the film tries to break free from the "in-your-stereotype of gels and glasses as well. "It's actually plump, colorful and clean."

Jonson is presenting an important issue: violence against gays, in a very sexy package. His main protagonist is not the usual gay character, he said. "He's a personal. He likes men, women, gays, ladyboys, chubby and lean people." Suppose challenge was the "shimmering budget."

"We could only afford a Panasonic 24P camera. We also couldn't rent lights, cranes and other equipment. We had to make do with a lot [of]," he admitted.

"Portalan" is the last film to be chosen at the Indiefest, which will close temporarily.

Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil, chair of the Philippine Independent Filmmakers Multipurpose Cooperative which nurtured the Quezon Love Fest and managed Indiefilms, acknowledged that "there are many criticisms against gay films, [particularly] about craft and content."

At the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender film fest in 2006, she learned that any community or festival should be open to all types of films—from serious, advocacy films to "politically incorrect" movies.

"We need to give everyone space," she said, "let them express the heard and affirmed."

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